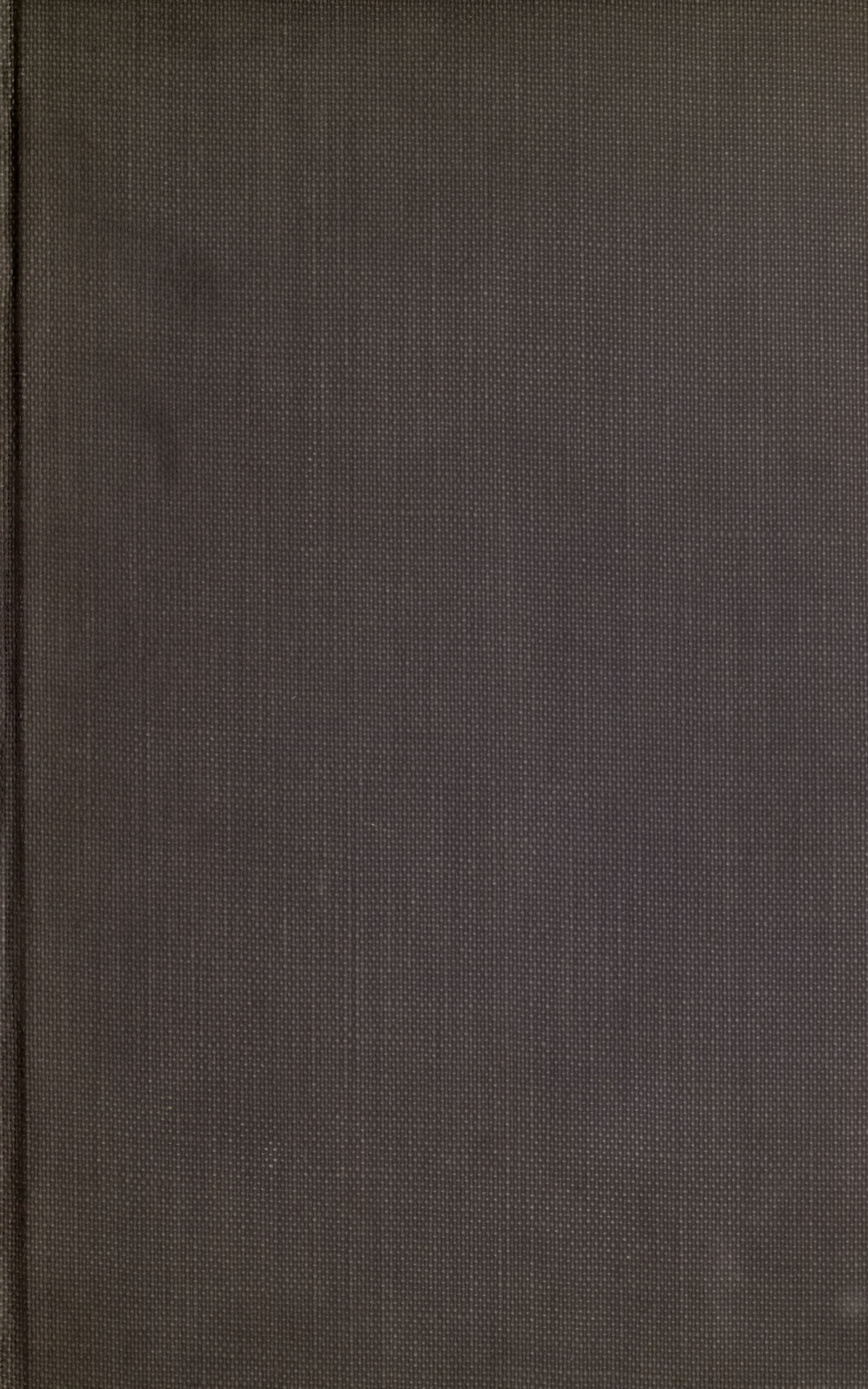






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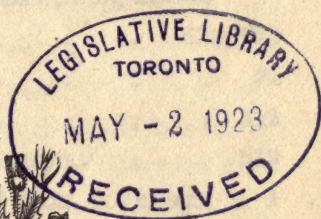
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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

VOL. CCXII.

JULY—DECEMBER 1922.



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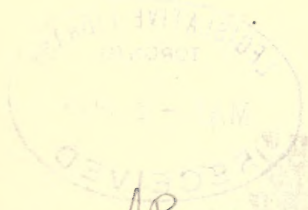
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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXI.

JULY 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

AN ODYSSEY OF FOURTEEN RIVERS.

BY MRS CECIL CLEMENTI.

THE only portion of the vast and largely unknown continent of South America that owns European sway is the territory of the Guianas—British, Dutch, and French,—of which the largest and least undeveloped is British Guiana. But, although it may bear a favourable comparison with its French and Dutch neighbours, British Guiana, one of our oldest colonies, has been outstripped in development by many far more recently acquired possessions, and to-day it remains largely unexplored and unsurveyed. Its north-west district, a comparatively small part of the whole colony, is contiguous with Venezuela, and is greater in area than all the British West India Islands, including Jamaica, put together; yet this region is almost entirely neglected, despite its admirable waterways, navigable for some 200 miles, its equable climate,

its gold, its timber, and its fertility of soil. Low hills most suitable for settlement rise within two miles of the coast; but there are scarcely any roads, and the sole means of regular communication with the outside world is the weekly steamer which plies between Morawhanna on the Barima river and Georgetown, the colony's capital, at the Demerara estuary. Very few of the inhabitants of the rest of the colony have seen anything of this territory, and it is only known to them as the source of most of the ground provisions, such as maize, yams, eddoes, cassava, and tancias, which are the chief food of the Creole population.

Except for the sea-journey above mentioned, which is only to be undertaken if one is an exceptionally good sailor, or else philosophically prepared for the endurance of some twenty-four hours of acute misery, the

only other approach to Morawhanna is by inland waterways, which afford a very delightful, though somewhat devious, means of reaching the district. This is the route over which I recently journeyed—an Odyssey of fourteen rivers, rich in interest and charm.

The first of these, the Demerara, has given its name to the yellow-crystal sugar which at present is British Guiana's chief title to fame; and, indeed, the colony is more often than not spoken of simply by the name of this one river, at the mouth of which lies Georgetown with its 60,000 inhabitants, a medley of many immigrant races. The Demerara, as it slips lazily into the Atlantic, affords a beautiful river harbour to Georgetown; its broad smooth stream, leading away inland almost due south, is navigable by ocean-going ships for sixty miles. White sails of sloops, schooners, and fishing-boats shine against the blue-grey glimmer of the opaque water or the vivid green of the low flat banks, a scene of peace which no Caribbean hurricane ever threatens. But there is a wicked fairy who neutralises all British Guiana's heaven-sent gifts. Currents sweeping along the coast wash seas of mud into the Demerara with each tide, and have laid a bar to seaward, which denies all steamers of deep draught access to what should be one of the best and safest harbours of South America.

From Georgetown on the east bank to Vreedenhoo, a

mile opposite on the western bank, there runs a Government ferry, and on this occasion we were concerned only to cross the Demerara and leave it behind us. Then we drove by motor-car westwards for twenty miles along the coast to Parika on the Essequibo estuary. The road, like all the coast roads of British Guiana, is thrown up as an earth-dam with a trench on either hand. To the south lie rice-fields and sugar and coco-nut plantations, but the Atlantic is too close and too encroaching in its habits to permit much cultivation on the northern side. The dwellings of East Indian colonists are strung out all along the way, and their poultry, donkeys, and cattle—for there is much fine cattle on the coast—wander about the road in easy and untended fashion, and in serene disregard of the frantic hoots of the motorist desirous of catching the Demerara or Essequibo ferries. The bright red highway in its deep eternally green setting is picturesque enough; but the low-lying coastal flats are flooded after any heavy rainfall, and their inhabitants live an amphibious life, only rendered possible by the marvellously healthy sea-breezes and the sanitary effect of tropical sunshine.

At Parika we are in the delta of the Essequibo, a great river over 600 miles long, which, with its big tributaries the Mazaruni and Cuyuni, spreads over the greater part of the colony. In the extreme south

of British Guiana the upper Essequibo draws its head-waters from the Akarai Mountains on the Brazilian frontier; the Mazaruni rises on Roraima in the west, and flows in countless windings through the dense forests of the rich diamond country; whilst to the north-west the Cuyuni, famous for its gold booms, comes in from Venezuela and forms the southern boundary of the North-West District. Beautiful and noble streams they are, but access to the heart of the colony is not to be won by their means without long toil and danger. Every year lives and goods are lost in their cruel rapids, and the Essequibo above Bartica is so dangerous that boat-captains have been forbidden by law to attempt to shoot its cataracts. All traffic has to be diverted at Rockstone and carried across to the Demerara by rail.

Higher up there are seventy miles of river beyond the King William IV. and the Manarowah Falls, which are said to have been completely unknown to man until, in 1870, Mr Barrington-Brown succeeded at great risk in getting past these barriers. In his wonderful book, 'Canoe and Camp Life in British Guiana,' he gives a most interesting account of the tameness of animal life where man had never been, and he also tells of the amazement and terror of the Teruma aborigines when his party emerged from the forbidden region. These people, who had,

of course, never seen a white man, regarded approach from the west by the Cuyuwini river as the only possible access to their country, and believed that supernatural terrors as well as natural obstacles barred the Essequibo to human-kind. But none of this was the country of our quest, whither the way led across the Essequibo's mouth. Truly it is a wicked and useless river, for even in its great estuary, twelve miles wide, the small Government steamers have to thread a passage by devious channels; and though all the navies of the world might ride at anchor off Bartica in its huge watersmeet with the Mazaruni and Cuyuni, the problem of how to get even the smallest ocean-going ship thither has yet to be solved.

From Parika, the Government ferry bore us across the salt yellow water with many a wide detour to avoid the shoals off several large islands, two of which grow rice and sugar. Then we entered the mouth of the Supenaam Creek on the western shore and disembarked. One day a road will run up the bank of the Supenaam, and then swing westwards along the hill ridges above the Cuyuni and so into Venezuela. Thus would the Blue Mountains be opened for development, and overland communication with the north-west be provided. Then the river Odyssey would be no longer needed. But these things are dreams, matters which lie on the knees of the gods, and the gods have not

been propitious to British Guiana.

Turning aside with a sigh from gazing up the Supenaam's black stream, we addressed ourselves to things as they are, and proceeded by car once more along a coastal road. From Supenaam stelling to Suddie, where there is a Government rest-house, is a pleasant drive of ten miles. Sometimes the rice-fields sweep up to the road on both sides, and the eye rejoices in the exquisite varieties of yellow-green paddy, while its indefinable scent comes in puffs upon the breeze; then a high avenue of mango-trees and coconut-palms, interspersed with bread-fruit and lime-trees, borders the way, in the shade of which are the adobe huts of coolies and russet-brown heaps of paddy dry on mats by the roadside. Bright gleams of growing rice shine at intervals through the trees, which tempt one to walk "aback" along the inviting little paths, atop of the bunds. Indeed, these Essequibo rice-lands are unusually picturesque. They lie between reefs of low sandhills clothed in forest, and I have walked there when it seemed as though every second tree were a "Longjohn" piled with blossoms like driven snow. My memory is haunted by the glory of those smiling fields lying in the arms of the forest, rich in every tint of green beauty bathed in the glorious sunshine of Guiana that gives a richer colour to the nature it blesses than the light of any

land I know. On the dams blue wood-smoke rises from little adobe-walled sheds, thatched with silver-grey troolie palm, and almost hidden by banana-fans, picturesque, indeed, and adding just the perfect note of colour to the scene, but damper and more unsuitable for human habitation than can be imagined. Here the coolie loves to dwell amidst his rustling rice, working when and how he pleases, getting through his fits of malaria and ague lying on the mud floor of his domicile, and offering a steady and effective passive resistance to the efforts made on behalf of health and sanitation.

Behind the cultivated lands there is a big jungle-swamp, but if some one who knows leads you across by a safe path, you find yourself on the pleasant shores of the fascinating Acrabisce and Iturabisce Lakes, where a delightful holiday may be spent. Good fishing rewards very early risers, and all day long it is cool there and bathing is delightful. Low sandhills rising at intervals along the shores bear occasional Indian huts, where among the prickly leaves of pine-apple plants, grey-green flushed with red, delightful little lizards, grey-green and ruby-red to match, run riot. Southward spreads the unbroken primeval forest, whilst north-westwards runs a chain of lakes, some of which are utilised by the coastal estates as water-conservancies.

At Suddie, the Government hospital, police-station, rest-

house, and quarters for Government officers, stand close to the sea, whose murmur fills the place. It is a pleasant spot, where the breeze has undisputed sway. Close by is the Onderneeming reformatory and industrial school with its lovely garden and well-kept acres of lime, coffee, and cocoa. The school operates a small lime factory, which provides a market for the limes of the coast peasantry. A pannier-laden donkey collects the fruit from the school's own trees, and cheerful little dusky misdemeanants unpack the fragrant loads. The bigger boys attend to the cattle, for Onderneeming boasts a fine dairy farm besides a stud of water-buffaloes, who glare at you like cross old ladies through the horns that curl around their eyes like spectacle-rims. They are the ugliest beasts in existence, I think, and their disapproval of strangers goes further than their looks, for they will gladly knock down and trample people who unwarily get to windward of them. I never gave them a chance myself, since years ago in China I fled from one with three naval officers accompanying my flight. The most humiliating thing about such an adventure is that one small child familiar with the brute can easily calm it down again from the frenzy into which the obnoxious odour of the European throws it.

We spent several days at Colony House, as the Suddie rest-house is called; then on 27th September 1921, shortly

before 5 o'clock in the morning, we packed ourselves and all our belongings into a motor-car and sped forth into a yet dark world, fresh with the cold dew of earliest day. The crescent of a waning moon dropped into the sea; stars blazed wonderfully overhead with Orion's glorious constellation shining in the zenith.

Gradually the countryside became visible in ghost-like pale-grey outline, and the sky changed from its gold-studded depth to a dim blue dome flashing sparks of silver light. Human forms, flitting white through the gloom, became distinct in sarong and turban, and then the full tide of day splashed on us suddenly, for dawn in the tropics is as brief as are the exquisite twilight moments of evening which pass in one cool soft sigh.

As soon as there was light the road became alive at once with donkey-carts, men, women, and children, cattle and poultry; and when our car halted because of a puncture, a friendly and curious crowd soon collected fore and aft. The sandflies collected too, but an amiable personage, adorned with golden ornaments, commanded certain small boys to "run fo' fire," green rushes were cut and caused to smoulder, so that soon a "smoke-fire fo' de missee" kept the spiteful black stinging specks away.

For many miles the Atlantic borders on the very road, and concrete walls and concrete-faced dams protect the low-

lying coast from the great ocean's "spill-over." One's lips are salt with the spray of the trade wind.

Sugar and rice form the chief cultivation here as on the rest of the coast, the former ever decreasing in acreage and giving place to the latter. Coconut-palms are everywhere, and there are wide pastures, also vast stretches of rush-covered swamp, whose splendid fertility cries aloud to become the rice-lands of the future. After some twenty miles the road changes its course, and runs north-westerly instead of due north, so that between it and the sea is placed a briny, swampy jungle with an evil brackish smell, but haunted nevertheless by beautiful blue-grey and snow-white cranes, as well as countless other birds. The road used to end suddenly five miles from the Pomeroon river, appalled before a great eta-palm swamp; but in 1914 an earth-causeway was thrown up and the road carried through on it to the Pomeroon bank. I well remember at Christmas, in 1914, attempting to drive through to the river. The car stuck fast, and we had to walk on to get help from the little riverside hamlet known as Charity. The attentions of buzzing black mosquitoes, "as large as snipe," spurred lagging footsteps, and scarcely gave one's mind time to dwell on the legend that the engineer in charge of the construction had once fallen through his road into the quaking bog and been extricated

by his hair. But six years have made a great difference: the road has consolidated, the trenches have helped to drain the swamp, and rice is being grown on both sides. Here and there, where the land has not been cleared and the tide of dense swamp-forest closes upon the road, one gazes into the fearful tangle of vegetation, warped and woofed together by lianas and creeping plants of every description, and then realises what the work of clearing has been. The wonderful fertility of the virgin soil repays the labour, and good indeed it is to see the golden sheen of ripening rice, even though the jealous forest lowers close behind.

We reached Charity at 7 A.M., and found a busy market going on. There were several motor-cars and a motor-bus there, also scores of corials and "bateaux" on the river, for, since the road was brought to Charity and the Pomeroon thus connected with the rest of the colony, land on the banks has been largely taken up and cleared, so that there is to-day continuous cultivation on both sides down to the sea.

We embarked in a Government launch, which had just been put on the river to carry on a newly-established service up and down the Pomeroon. Once in the week it goes out to sea, and then up the Moruka Creek to Acquero. We had come to avail ourselves of this opportunity, as Acquero is another stage in the journey to

the north-west. The little launch was very comfortable, and the service seemed highly popular, judging by the way she was constantly stopped by people pushing off to her in every kind of curious craft with parcels, letters, and passengers. Our "captain," who also discharged in his sole person the duties of sorter and postman, blew constantly loud and long upon a horn a deep and not unmusical note, and the frail boats popped out from the mangrove-screened banks. There is, of course, no road in the Pomeroon district, so that the river is the only highway. Hence the inhabitants learn to use their corials with a wonderful ease and dexterity. The smallest children handle these canoes with a skill that seems to come as easily to them as breathing, and it is a quaint sight to see a boatload of small woolly-heads, packed as tight as they can sit, paddling themselves off to school. Any white children would capsize instantly, for sitting in a corial so as to keep it afloat is no easy matter, especially when it has reached the dilapidated state in which one often sees them still induced to render service. More than one small black boy came off to us in a corial, the bows of which had been completely knocked away. Seated in the extreme stern, so that the open end should be raised in the air, the lad would paddle along gleefully with a letter for the launch-mail between his teeth.

The lower Pomeroon is a broad and stately stream. I believe its head-waters are lovely, where the black current has changed to a crystal clearness and big tree-ferns overhang the water. That country is, however, known only to very few, and I have never been fortunate enough to visit it. But the great wide waterway from Charity down to the sea filled me with delight, whether it was mirroring heaven's own blue, or fleeced over by grey driving cloud, or spouting a million pearls as the heavy drops of a tropical shower struck the steel-coloured surface and wrapped the banks in mist-like veils of moving rain, giving ineffably tender lines to myriad-pointed palm, bushy mangrove, and troolie hut alike.

All along the lower Pomeroon the mangrove fringe is about forty feet deep; in fact, it is through the agency of this astonishing tree that the foreshore has been reclaimed through the long centuries. It drops from its branches tenacious suckers with hungry black mouths, thirsting to feed on the tidal waters, and at low tide the trees are revealed standing on a maze-like pediment of formidable sucker-roots. Gradually, of course, sediment and drift accumulate between these roots and so soil is formed, while the mangrove flings out further suckers and advances seaward in its work of land-making. Behind the mangrove-bush lies promising cultivation of ground provi-

sions, coffee, and coconuts. The houses generally stand on cleared spaces on the banks where a lane has been cut in the mangrove. Many of these are just rough troolie huts, but an increasing number are nicely built wooden houses, from whose airy verandahs the popular colonial portrait of the Prince of Wales smiles down upon passing boats. The grant-holder's name is usually stuck on a post emerging from the water, and one Rodrigues, I remember, proclaims his calling by a representation of a large pair of scissors with the legend, "tailor and fashionable cutter."

There has been much prosperity in the district as a result of war prices, and it is unfortunate that the coconut estates, most of which are newly planted, are just reaching maturity when the market is so poor.

However, we saw the Government steamer which comes fortnightly up the river from Georgetown for freight busily loading coconuts and timber for railway sleepers, and her captain reported her as doing extremely well, despite the times.

About noon, having been helped by a falling tide, we reached the sea. The Pomeeroon does not widen appreciably at its mouth, but meets the ocean's embrace in its own serene and dignified manner. We put on our mackintoshes and prepared for all eventualities, as the five miles along the coast to the mouth of the

Moruka can be very rough and squally. The captain's green parrot, who had been wandering freely about the launch, appeared to think that great responsibility devolved upon him, and assumed an intent expression in imitation of our bronze-faced East Indian steersman. Fortunately our little vessel had an easy passage. She dashed the spray from her bows and bravely faced the surge of the shallow tossing sea. The land curved away westwards, a thin crescent of brilliant green encircling the yellow water, a couple of scarlet ibis in flight shone like drops of blood, and an occasional swiftly passing cloud made ink-like shadows.

My husband had previously made this passage in a "bateau," which threatened to get swamped every moment. It had been necessary to hug the land so that he might be able, if the boat did disappear from under him, to perch like a secretary-bird upon the mangrove roots, though in that case the next step to take would have required prolonged consideration. However, no such risk is run with the launch service, and we soon gained the mouth of the Moruka, so screened by mangrove as to be almost invisible to seaward, and we thus entered upon our fifth waterway.

The Moruka is a narrow winding stream with a charm all its own. The mangroves form only a narrow fringe about its mouth, and once you

are well inside this barrier you seem to have entered a new world. The forest on either hand rises tall and green, lit here and there by some bright-hued orchid, butterfly, or bird, and the air is exquisitely fragrant after the salt sea-breeze. On this particular occasion a grey-white blossom of rich sweetness seemed everywhere, scenting the very water, as fallen petals floated down on the slow black stream. Sunshine and shadow made the reflected water-world appear even more beautiful than the world above. The blue of the tropical sky gleamed yet brighter beneath us than above our heads, and a deep silent peace brooded around.

The land hereabouts is largely swamp with numerous "islands" in it, composed of red ironstone or sand, and inhabited by Warrau Indians, who centre round the two mission-stations at Waramuri and Santa Rosa. The first-named is an Anglican mission perched upon some sandhills. There is no resident priest, but a visiting clergyman comes to officiate in the quaint church, and there is a school presided over by a negro schoolmistress. It was not school-time when we arrived, and numbers of cheerful little, nude, bronze persons were frolicking about over the stream in corials, whisking their minute paddles about as if they were part of themselves. The children seemed, indeed, the chief inhabitants of the place; the elders appeared nearly all

away. The "captain" of the village, a dear old man named Coxall, had gone with a gang of men to effect the yearly cleaning of the *itabo* or channel between the Moruka and the creeks flowing Waini-wards. We were paddled by a pair of children up a water-lane fringed with rushes and lilies to a landing at the foot of the sandhills. There is a shop close by kept by a Chinaman from Canton, who enjoyed a chat in his native language with my husband, to the intense interest of the childish crowd at our heels. This Chinaman also controls the export trade of the place, which I gathered to be hammocks, cassareep, which is a sauce made from the cassava-plant, and big round parcels of cassava-bread tied up very neatly in palm-leaves. The Waramuri "houses," which are merely open sheds roofed with troolie-palm, cluster under the shade of coconuts along the hill-ridge, and looked to be cool refuges from the glare of the white sand. Above the village is a mound whence we obtained a view over a sea of forest. This mound is said to be the burial-place of the dead after a battle between Warrau and Carib in vague far-off days.

Ten miles from Waramuri is the Government station of Acquero. We reached this place at 3 P.M. after so many sudden windings and turns of the creek, as it grew ever narrower, that we wondered whether our poor little small launch would tie

herself into a knot. Greatly to the amazement of our fellow-passengers, we sat on the roof the better to enjoy the beauty of colour and atmosphere around us, though occasionally it was necessary to throw ourselves prostrate to avoid being dragged off by overhanging branches, as the launch buried her nose in the bank after coming round some unusually sharp bend. Then the "crew," an East Indian, would dive overboard to clean the propeller of weed, and we would resume our proceedings.

Acquero is merely a clearing close to the edge of the creek, and consists of two very picturesque houses built entirely of troolie-palm, one of which serves as a post-office and the other as rest-house. The negro postmaster, who is also a qualified dispenser, has his quarters above the post-office. The rest-house is a one-storied, one-roomed building with an open verandah round it. There were a good many coffee-bushes growing in the clearing, which seemed to be bearing well, besides orange and lime trees and the ubiquitous coconut-palms. There are Indian benabs close by in the forest, and at dusk the creek resounded with the splashing and laughter of children enjoying their evening bathe.

Mr E. H. King, the Commissioner of the North-West District, was waiting for us at Acquero. He had travelled to meet us from Morawhanna over the inland waterways in his

tent-boat with six Indian paddlers.

In the cool of the evening we went on about a mile in the tent-boat to visit Santa Rosa, the Roman Catholic Mission. Santa Rosa stands on an ironstone hill surrounded almost entirely by "wet savannah"—that is, the vast shallow lake from which the Moruka and many other creeks take their being. It is covered with razor-grass that cuts like a knife, and with water-lilies. An *itabo* or waterpath is kept clear across it to the Bara-bara Creek, whence continuous waterways lead into the great rivers of the north-west. From the mission landing-place and boathouse, a beautiful avenue of coconut-palms leads up to the top of the hill, where a large white cross stands before the church and presbytery. A priest and two nuns live here always, and we were fortunate in finding the bishop, who with another priest was visiting the district. Santa Rosa is a pretty place; it commands a wide view, and the breeze blows freshly over it, but one wonders how white people can exist there always without change or break. The nuns especially—for they have a very small house, and they never leave the precincts of the mission—filled me with wondering admiration. Their school is attended by a large number of Indian children, some of whom, the priest told us, speak four languages—English, Spanish, and two Indian dialects.

We pulled back to Acquero in the dusk, while bats skimmed over the dim waterway and the plash of our paddles alone broke the still sweetness of night's gracious coming. As we landed, although a tender glow still lingered in the west, the palm fronds stood in clear-cut outline against the stars. Few things have a greater variety of charm than the marvellous fan of a coconut leaf. Each frond bears a myriad spikes tapering to infinite fineness, and whether they sparkle in the sun or flash back the moonlight, whether tossed this way and that in endless twinkling play of differing angles or motionless in gleaming dawn or azure noon-day, they take one's heart with their beauty. As the stems grow tall and lanky, they lose much of their grace, but a big tropic moon rising behind a group of young palms, or a delicate crescent resplendent in earth-shine caught among the pin-like tips, are pictures not easily forgotten.

Next morning at 6 A.M., when Orion's morning greeting had already paled into invisibility, we pushed off in the tent-boat with the Commissioner. It was a still and wonderful morning: a golden tide of light slowly overflowed the world; the sky shone in purest deepest blue, with a dado, as it were, all round the horizon of magnificent pink-flushed, gold-tinted, cumulus clouds. The great sweep of razor-grass rustled golden; the air

stirred by gentle breezes seemed alive with light, and dewdrops gleamed on the lily leaves. All around us stretched the wide "wet savannah," dotted with islands, some merely clumps of bushes powdered with scented blossom, others, an acre or two in extent, bearing big forest trees. These larger islands are all inhabited by Indians, and have water-paths cut to them from the main stream. There were a good many Indians about, seated motionless in their corials fishing, or skimming along the water in their own swift and noiseless fashion. We passed Coxall, the Waramuri "captain," and his men standing up to their waists in water, clearing away weeds and lily plants. These lilies open only at night, so that unless you travel by moonlight, you only see jealously-closed green buds among the beautiful floating leaves.

The Moruka Creek rises in the "wet savannahs" within a mile of Acquero, and there is little to mark the point where you leave it to enter the *itabo*, or, again, where you emerge from the *itabo*, to follow the beginnings of the Bara-bara. The same meandering path of shallow bronze water winds through an endless stretch of razor-grass and lilies. In dry weather, only corials can navigate the *itabo*, but we had enough water to be under no anxiety as to the passage of our tent-boat. Such a boat is a most comfortable vehicle of travel, for it is possible to

stretch out at full length on the long cushioned seats and be well protected from the sun by the tent roof; the splash of the paddles is restful music after the explosive progress of a launch, and one soon passes into a dreamy state of fusion with the silent nature around.

About 10 A.M. we found ourselves unmistakably in the Bara-bara, which is a much smaller creek than the Moruka, and we slipped from the open savannah back again into forest. Trees entirely overarched the little stream, but the banks were still swampy, so that we had to breakfast in the boat. The meal was most skilfully prepared by a small Indian boy, Adolphus by name. Mr King first made the acquaintance of Adolphus when he and another young Indian were brought before him, as magistrate, on a charge of having disturbed the peace by fighting. The other lad whined loudly; but Adolphus stood up to the charge so openly and manfully that Mr King conceived a liking for him, and took him into his household. As the Commissioner's life is largely spent in boats, he had trained Adolphus to be a most handy little travelling servant. Indians, moreover, love travelling and all that appertains thereto, and the boat-hands assisted Adolphus in looking after our comfort whenever possible. Most handily they would place on a paddle and float down to him, as he cooked astern, the teapots, cups, and such-like

implements from the store in baskets amidships. Unfortunately, the day always comes, and generally sooner rather than later, when the Indian vanishes back into his forest life, and is no more seen by those who have lavished an infinity of pains on his education.

After a short halt we continued down the Bara-bara, meeting no one, though in one place we saw a corial moored to a tree, in the fork of which was a rough platform with a hammock swung above it. The owner had disappeared into the jungle, but he had not left his possessions entirely unattended, for as we passed, we detected a tiny brown child standing on the platform with his little naked person pressed motionless against the tree-trunk and his eyes fast closed lest we should catch sight of him.

The swampy jungle on both sides of our creek can hardly have afforded his father a happy hunting-ground. Indeed, it looked most forbidding. Among the low trees there were plentiful pimpler-palms, bearing clusters of bright scarlet berries, but whose stems bristled with formidable black thorns—nay, daggers rather than thorns, as cruel as any ever imagined by fairy tale to bar the path to an enchanted princess. The day was now advancing and the sun rapidly ascending. Wherever the creek side trees caught the light, they shone like the silver forest of legend, while the shadow loomed almost

as black as the jet-black water which bore us. It is this sharp contrast of light and shade that makes photography in these latitudes so often a disappointment. Blood-red and azure-blue dragon-flies, fleeting specks of colour, hovered fitfully over the stream, and occasional flights of bats disturbed from overhanging branches fittted noiselessly before us. By the time we had reached our little creek's debouchment into the beautiful Biara, the very birds had disappeared for their midday repose, and noon lay heavy on flower and tree.

The Commissioner's launch, the *Lady Bruce*, was lying at the watersmeet awaiting us. She and her old captain, one Barrow, have been travelling the north-west rivers for over thirty years, and day and night seem to them both alike. She is a roomy and comfortable boat with a wood-fed furnace, which provides her with steam, so much more agreeable than internal combustion engines and very much more economical.

At about 2 P.M. we set off down the Biara with the tent-boat lashed astern. All these creeks, despite their general resemblance, have each one their own distinct character. The Biara's dominant note is the manicole palm. All along the banks clusters of it soar to the sky. Nowhere else have I seen such a profusion of the delicate stems, crowned with their dainty vivid-green fronds. The manicole is lighter in build

and colour than any other palm I know, and stands a veritable "lady of the woods" amongst the heavier jungle.

The Biara Creek is but little wider than the Bara-bara, but it is very much deeper, and can be navigated by steam launch for miles above the spot where we embarked on its course. It flows in long reaches in which the manicoles mirror their emerald tufts all the way; but its chief charm to me lay in small vignettes of beauty that I longed to see perpetuated into paintings on silk, carved on cameos, or etched on some screen with the marvellous Japanese touch—long pendent ferns stretching to kiss their own reflections; a lily admiring her own cream-coloured hood in the same mirror; clusters of red-veined calladium just above the water; yellow-breasted birds clinging to some flowering rush; beautiful, long blue leaves growing so flat to a bare projecting stem as to appear painted lichen-like upon it; *moka-moka* leaves, shaped like elongated hearts, showing in groups of exquisite foreshortenings both in the real and in the water-world; piled cumulus cloud as a background to stately palms, and so on for ever. Then there was a tiny steel-blue calladium blossom, which poked continually out of the stream near the banks with a long spiked hood, and which had the same air of watching expectancy that one notices in the foxgloves of English lanes, as though

some tiny curious spirit were concealing itself within, all agog to see the human life pass by. Birds, large and small, were everywhere, for the Biara is bird-haunted beyond the wont of even these silent lonely creeks. Splendid white cranes hung like fallen bits of cloud on the foliage, and one of these flapped lazily ahead of us for several miles, alighting now and then, and waiting for us to come up.

Almost before we knew it we emerged into a flood of sunshine, and found ourselves in the big Baramanni river. This is a magnificent stream, as wide and as deep as the Pomeroon below Charity. The stately and beautiful forest on its banks is entirely unbroken by any sign of man's occupation, and the deep silence of the bush broods over it. We met a few Indian corials, which appeared to have been downstream to procure the valuable house-building troolie palm. Some were navigated by a single paddler, others, so loaded as to show only half an inch of freeboard, conveyed a whole family, dogs and poultry in the bows. A few slow strong strokes would shoot the canoe forward on the sluggish current, and then the paddlers would pause and stare at us with stolid eyes. The dark corials, fashioned out of hollowed tree-trunks, and the Indians' own bronze bodies harmonised completely with the black river water, while the cocks' red combs and the hides of the dogs,

all sitting as motionless as the people, together with the cargo of green troolie-leaf, touched with colour a picture which scarcely seemed alive. At no time does the Indian of the bush waste energy in purposeless motion and gesture; indeed, all coloured people have a statue-like repose about them whenever actual effort is not called for, and often when it is, which contrasts with the constant restless movement of white folk.

The Baramanni was here running due west, parallel with the sea-coast, and with the bright light of late afternoon falling full upon it, the broad stream turned to blue and silver, gleaming like a shield. About ten miles below the Biara's mouth, the Baramanni flows into the Waini (pronounced *Wine-y*), and we halted at the Government station established on the point between the confluence. It is a pretty little place, which has remained much the same since it was first established thirty years ago. A few acres have been cleared and empoldered with mud-dams to keep out the flood-waters. There are only three buildings—a small strong brick "lock-up," a police station most picturesquely constructed of troolie-palm, with quarters for the four negro policemen, sole inhabitants of the place, on the top floor, and a wooden rest-house, built above store-rooms, with a steep troolie-roof. The compound boasts a couple of fine mango-trees, a few coffee

bushes, and some straggling ground provisions and sugarcane, also four or five perfectly magnificent kokerite palms. Spider-lilies and white ranunculus blossoms bordered the dams with a gracious lightness. From the verandah of the rest-house, beneath the troolie-eves, the view down the broad Waini aglow in the setting sun was serene and beautiful with the magic of evening upon it. Flocks of parrots, black dots against a tawny sky, dropped screeching into the forest to roost, and small twittering birds filled the mango-trees.

The Waini is one of British Guiana's finest rivers. Like the Demerara, it flows broad and deep, unbroken by cataracts, save in its upper reaches, but it is wider and more stately. Unfortunately the bar at its mouth prevents it from being approached from the sea save by steamers of very shallow draught, and the jungle reigns undisturbed on its banks as on the Baramanni's.

After an evening meal in the rest-house we re-embarked at 8.30 p.m. in the *Lady Bruce*. My husband and I had our camp-beds established in the bows, while Mr King occupied the tent-boat. It was cool and delightful; we slept well, as the *Lady Bruce* pursued her even way. Before us stretched the Waini, a wide silver pathway filled with stars; on either hand a deep black velvet rim marked the dense forest, undistinguishable from its shadow on the water. This ink-like

monotonous mass was once broken by the eerie spectacle of a tree on fire. Apparently it was a hollow one, and the empty trunk served as a funnel from which tongues of flame and clouds of sparks soared above the dark tree-tops. Then once more we had "the night in her silence, the stars in their calm."

When we awoke at dawn we were approaching the mouth of the Waini sixty miles below Baramanni Station, and soon afterwards we turned south into the Mora passage. This is really an *itabo* connecting the Barima river with the Waini's estuary, and affording the Barima a short cut to the sea some seventy miles from its own mouth in Venezuela. Within living memory the Mora passage was a small channel barely navigable by launch; now year by year, nay tide by tide, it widens; more water rushes down from the Barima, and stronger flow the currents tearing at the banks. In places the channel is ninety feet deep, and it seems as though the Barima, despite arbitration treaties, has determined to remain a British river with its outlet to the sea in British territory. Would that its mighty volume of water could sweep away the Waini bar, and thus open an approach for ocean liners to some of the finest waterways in the world!

We were unfortunate in encountering a heavy tide against us, and our little launch clinging to the bank slowly fought

her way inch by inch, spending several hours in achieving the seven miles of the channel, but at last we landed at the Government Agency, which occupies the extreme point between the Mora and the Barima river. The Agency was established by Sir Everard in Thurn in 1890. The house is a picturesque wooden building with a high-pitched troolie roof. Several acres of land were empoldered by Sir Everard, and he made a famous garden, rich with many rare and valuable plants. The greater part of this land has now been swept away into the Mora, and the entire compound must soon follow. Fifty paces from the house, a furious tide drags at the mud-dams, and at Morawhanna township on the opposite side of the passage the condition of things is nearly as bad. From the comfortable verandah of the Agency there is a fine view over what remains of the garden with the wide Barima beyond. Great bushes of Bourgainvillea, on which the blue sakis love to perch, as though they knew how becomingly deep purple sets off their azure plumage, and glorious clumps of bamboo with kiskadees clinging like yellow blossoms to the bending plumes—all this, against a broad background of water, changing colour with the changing sky, is beautiful indeed; and I clearly remember the striking picture of a storm coming up the river—a fierce jagged cloud sweeping onwards, with a torn black

curtain of pouring rain, whose roar sounded afar off as it beat upon the forest, whilst lit up by a brilliant shaft of stormy sunlight there scudded over the slate-coloured waves a corial containing two white-shirted men. It was rigged with an enormous russet-palm leaf as sail that bore it along before the squall like a streak of lightning. It seemed impossible that they should not capsize before our eyes in the racing current, but they gained the Agency compound an instant before the storm broke and the whole world dissolved in grey water.

Later, when the crash of the tropical downpour had abated somewhat, we steamed down the Barima five miles to the frontier. Grey was the only colour left to the world; wide grey river pearled by rain-drops, grey banks of mangrove wrapped in veils of rain, low sky all one vague grey mist. Then suddenly a large white board, stuck diamond-wise on a pole, emerged from the water close to the marshy bank, bearing the imposing words "Frontier Douana." Far away on the opposite bank we could just pick up the glint of another such board indicating the line of the frontier cutting diagonally across the Barima's course, which flows on almost parallel with the coast to the sea.

Our frontier outpost is a police station built on piles in the stream, where two constables are on duty for twenty-four hours at a time. The

Venezuelans have an establishment on the bank just below, where we could see some coconut fronds above a low roof as we turned to go back to the Agency.

Next morning early the faithful *Lady Bruce* bore us four miles up-stream from the Agency to the watersmeet of the Barima and Aruka, above Morawhanna township. The Aruka is a fine river, small sister only to the Barima, and though it carries less water its bed is even deeper, the lower Aruka's channel having a depth of seventy feet. It is said to be the deepest trench anywhere between Amazon and Orinoco. There are more than two hundred miles of waterway suitable for steam navigation in this neglected district, but their emptiness is melancholy. On the Barima banks near Morawhanna, and on both sides of the lower Aruka, there is a good deal of cultivation. Unfortunately all of it is close to the rivers on low-lying land, which is always liable to flood; and its health conditions, like those of the more inhabited and equally low-lying coast, are reflected in British Guiana's hitherto sorrowful vital statistics. The soil is rich and will grow anything if properly drained; but the grant-holders are nearly all small men, negro and East Indian, working their own land in more or less casual fashion, and in utter indifference to the laws of sanitation. In the Morawhanna township itself the state of insanitation

defies all description, and the fact that the population there is alive at all bears eloquent testimony to the natural healthiness of the climate.

But now at last we may leave these swamps and for a short time turn our attention to hills, from whence it is hoped health and strength may flow. After we had steamed four miles up the Aruka we landed at Kumaka, and walked over the half-mile of branch road that connects the new road now in construction along the Mabaruma and Hosororo Hills with the Aruka. The ground about Kumaka landing was cleared and planted with rubber some years ago, but the trees have not thriven owing to leaf-disease, which has ruined all the rubber-trees in the colony grown from imported seedlings. Some of the land is now under coffee, which thrives excellently, and the manager, Mr Pierre, has a beautiful and healthy house on the hills. Mr Pierre kindly mounted my husband and myself on two delightful horses, recently ridden for him over the forest-track from the Tumemo savannahs in Venezuela, past Five Stars on our frontier, to Arakaka, whence they came by boat down the Barima. We rode up the hill and along the ridge northward in the direction of Morawhanna, whilst Mr Pierre, Mr King, and Mr Morris, the officer in charge of the road construction, followed in a mule cart. Wheeled traffic is, of course, a novelty in the

district. Even the Morawhanna township has nothing better than narrow mud-dams, which serve as footpaths.

It was exhilarating after days spent cooped up in boats to feel the elastic paces of good horses beneath us. Moreover, for many months we had lived on the coast-lands, where any deviation from a roadway dam is bound to lead you almost instantly into a swamp, so that it was a rare and refreshing treat to ride over charming hill country with exquisite views opening in all directions. The ironstone of the hills gives a beautiful red colour to the road, and as it wound between the deep green shade of the forest or contrasted with the marvellous sapphire of distant vistas, eye and mind were invigorated until even the mid-day tropical heat was scarcely felt.

We first visited the plateau to which the Government wishes to remove the Agency, the police station, and hospital now at Morawhanna, where their very existence is threatened by the inroads of the Barima river. This plateau also offers a splendid site for a township. By Dame Nature's especial grace it is bounded on one side by a narrow valley in which the white water of the Villaruel stream flows, one would say, on purpose to provide a settlement with a pure water supply in a natural reservoir. The water is delicious to drink, and the ground near it was littered by the golden fruit of lime-trees

planted years ago by an old Spaniard, whose name still clings to the stream.

We rode down the northern slope of the Mabaruma Hills to within three miles of Morawhanna, where the land becomes swamp once more. The road is continued through this swamp, which it is intended to empolder for rice, to the bank of the Barima opposite the Morawhanna township. It has been necessary to revert to an earth-dam to carry the road along these three miles, and this section, being as yet incomplete, had been deemed too much of a quagmire for the horses, hence our journey by water to Kumaka. The Mabaruma and Hosororo Hills are composed of red ironstone, which makes an excellent road surface, and as soon as the foundation has consolidated it will be surfaced by material brought by trolley down the hill.

Turning southward again, we retraced our steps, putting in a lovely gallop over the plateau, and then after a short rest at the hospitable Mr Pierre's house with its wonderful view, we rode on down the southern slope and along two miles of causeway across the low land which lies between the hill ranges. After this the road ascends the Hosororo Hills, the gradient being eased by a cutting where a pink vein of bauxite ore shows in the red ironstone soil. As soon as the top of the first spur is gained, one finds oneself at the Government experimental station,

where there is a comfortable rest-house, commanding a charming view to the east over forest, river, and hill. The ground in front drops away sharply, and on the steep hill-side were beautiful lemon-loaded trees, also coffee and limes in profusion. Close by, but with northerly aspect, Mr Morris has built himself a rough troolie-house, from the verandah of which we could see the line of the Mabaruma Hills along which we had come, and far beyond the dim blue line of the ocean whence blows the vital north-east breeze. Truly a pleasant spot, and one worthy of habitation.

Hosororo means "falling water," and the name is given by a beautiful white-water stream tumbling in musical cascades down to the Aruka at the foot of the hill. The Morawhanna township is entirely without a potable water supply, save what is obtained by catchment from the troolie roofs, as the Barima is brackish from the Mora passage, and in dry weather the people are obliged to fetch their drinking water by boat from Hosororo, a distance of ten miles.

After a welcome meal in the rest-house, we sallied forth to see the remaining four miles of road, all as yet accomplished. It runs fairly level along the Hosororo ridge, with a forest of splendid trees on both sides. Then suddenly a view of surprising beauty burst upon us. A big clearing has been made where the present road con-

struction ends, and an immense sweep of country is revealed, but except for a small coffee plantation bordering the Aruka, there is no sign of man's tenancy of the land. Blue waterways alone break the endless forest, encircled by range beyond range of hills, some of which were black in the shadow of coming rain, others shining in sunlit mist. Far, far to the east we saw the long dark ridge above the Cuyuni valley. One day that ridge must bear the line of communication joining the North-West District with the rest of the world, and will form the link between Georgetown and the Venezuelan trunk-road which already connects El Dorado on the upper Cuyuni with Ciudad Bolivar on the Orinoco.

It was a fine and inspiring sight. We unanimously agreed that the place should be named "Pisgah"; and Mr Morris told us how a black shovelman, recently taken on for road work, had been brought up here, and in amazed and awe-struck tones exclaimed, "Eh-eh-den. How de worl' so big." Born and bred on a coastal mud-flat, he had never before seen a view from rising ground. No wonder the sight astonished him. I said to myself, "How de worl' so beautiful," and it has been my good fortune to see many lovely sights. Alas, without the hand of man "to dress it and to keep it," the fairest country must remain a wilderness, and beyond this thirteen miles of a road in the

making we could go no farther, but must needs return to our waterways.

The next day we met the *Lady Bruce* at the foot of the hill below the rest-house, and pursued our course up the Aruka for another thirteen miles, after which we turned off into its tributary the Aruau. These two rivers are very similar; their calm deep streams have few windings, and from time to time the blue hills glance down on them. The vegetation is mostly low bush, with few palms save manicole, and they are in no profusion. We saw many beautiful orchids lighting up the banks, and the big red and white tuft of wild cocoa blossom flourishing in company with the long, dark, wild bean.

Then ten miles from the Aruka, the Aruau unexpectedly loses itself suddenly in a swamp, and we had to use a tent-boat to carry us on half a mile to the Yarakita portage, a trail three-quarters of a mile in length which spans the divide between the Barima and Amakura watersheds. Here we walked beneath huge and stately trees, and the large peacock-blue butterflies were like living light. When at the end of the path we embarked in a little tent-boat on the Yarakita Creek, we seemed to have stepped into fairyland itself. The narrow winding stream, still and clear as glass, shone beneath a roof of dense foliage among which the broad-leaved troolies stood like gigantic spreading flowers.

It was intensely still, and the least detail showed perfect in the water-mirror. Orchids shone double by the brink; butterflies gleamed from the creek's heart in yet more brilliant hue; every flower-petal, twig and tiniest leaf, was painted in the motionless water. I begged that the paddlers might be stopped a few minutes in order to realise fully the magical stillness. It was as though we were in a fairy hall, with floor of glass and emerald dome; save for the flitting butterflies, all things were crystallised into an enchanted trance. Then suddenly a tiny delicious squirrel peeped at us and scuttled from branch to branch, doubtless just one of an invisible army of creatures around us, but the only one who had let his curiosity get the better of his caution and betrayed his whereabouts.

As the Yarakita widened, we emerged once more into the light of common day, but though we left the fairy glamour behind us, the scene was very striking, steep hills rising on each side of us crowned with mist. The current was strewn with floating islands of blanket grass, and the serried, spade-like leaves of water-hyacinths with their blue flowers—cruel enemies of navigation they; but as there had been recent cleaning work done in the channel, we pursued our way unhindered down to the Yarakita's junction with the Amakura, where with a fourteenth river our Odyssey was com-

plete, and the frontier with Venezuela touched once more.

Perched on a hill-spur about two hundred feet above the watersmeet is a police station looking out over Venezuela, with a tiny rest-house beside it. A range of hills on the British side revealed itself to us, patchwise, between torn clouds of mist and rain, while Venezuela appeared as an ocean of dripping forest. Later a glorious orange and crimson sunset flush conquered the entire sky, and with nightfall the stars made a dome of glory over a mysterious world.

We felt, after all our wanderings on the lonely winding waterways, as though we had come an immense distance and were cut off from the rest of

humankind, but in reality the Yarakita station is only seven miles along the surveyed line from "Pisgah," and therefore only twenty miles from Morawhanna, although twice as far by water. When next I spin twenty miles along a first-class English highway, I shall think of far-away days when England too was a forest-smothered country, studded with swamps; and when I reflect how wearisome those same twenty miles must have seemed to the men who tramped ahead of Rome's legions to prepare her way, I shall rejoice that, having seen a beginning of things, I am thereby enabled with keener joy to appreciate the finished product of our own dear land.

PREDESTINATION.

VICTOR STAYSON, the eminent criminal counsel, was walking down that dullest of London thoroughfares, Harley Street, early one bright April morning.

Subconsciously he was comparing his present position with that of a prisoner brought back from the cells to hear the jury's verdict. Hundreds of times had he witnessed that scene, but never until now had he realised to the full what a nerve-racking ordeal the prisoner had to go through.

Some weeks ago, on leaving Court after a particularly hard day's work, he had been attacked by a severe spasm of coughing. It can have lasted at the most two or three minutes, but it seemed an eternity, and left him weak and exhausted. Next day a similar attack took place, and, feeling anxious, he had sent for the local practitioner. The doctor had promptly referred the matter to a specialist. That distinguished gentleman had called to his aid a surgeon, and lastly, an X-ray expert, who, working in the modern counterpart to the wizard's cave, took photographs of his chest and those shadows that lay therein. They had all sent in their reports, and at ten o'clock, by appointment, on this beautiful spring morning, his lordship, the specialist, would deliver judgment.

His dominant feeling was a fear that he might not be able to take the verdict, whatever it was, like a sportsman and a gentleman.

The whole interview had not taken five minutes, yet here he was down in the street again—his prospects and outlook completely changed, — a doomed man.

He walked rapidly in that maze of streets which lies between the Marylebone Road and Oxford Street, not heeding where he was going. He felt half-stunned. So that was going to be the end of him: he could pass his whole life in review now. It was nearly finished.

And what a parody it had been! Twenty-five years of training—fifteen of struggle, and ten of cheap success,—and then extinction. He saw no reason to believe there was anything afterwards. He wished he could, but his mind, used to a thorough scrutiny of evidence, trained to a merciless analysis of motive, and exercised continually in suppressing wayward imagination, gave him no help. Moreover, he told himself that if he did jettison all his confirmed materialistic views now, it would be nothing but fear that made him do so—a natural but unworthy animal fear. No, the views he had formed in a life-

time he would carry to the end.

He tried to picture the finish—such a short way off now. Very pale, and in bed; the nurse in collusion with the visitors who came to see him, acting on the motives of duty and pity. “Cheer him up; tell him he’s looking a little better to-day.”

Then a sort of background of temperature - charts, medicine-bottles, flowers, and grapes.

Then came the end. He saw himself dead with a hideous white shirt on. A mock respectability to be carried on even then.

He heard people saying—as he had heard so often before,—“Thank Heaven! that’s over. What a merciful relief.” His whole soul revolted against the idea—not of death, which seemed entirely incidental and natural, but of the atmosphere which surrounds it in this civilisation of ours.

His manhood revolted against it all. He would avoid that at any cost. He would go out into the desert, and die like an animal, alone, as though realising the sick beast is an object of aversion to its healthy fellows.

Or suicide—he considered it dispassionately: a quick way out, if things got too bad. But no—it wouldn’t do. It was the illegality of the act which negated it in his lawyer’s brain.

And then, thinking on in the same strain, he wondered if he could evade the breaking

of the law, and yet attain the quick end. If he could put himself in such a position that he would be killed by natural causes——

He had reached Oxford Street now, and the crowded pavement made him more alert, and changed the current of his thoughts. At any rate, he had a few months left, and here was a chance at last, for a short time, to enjoy the real pleasures of life. Not the tinsel make-believe joys of town—no, the real thing, obtainable only in the big open spaces of Nature: like the delights of the old yachting days, the kick of the tiller, and the spray and wind on one’s face.

Then the two lines of thought linked themselves up. Why not just sail out into the ocean? He might even get somewhere, and at any rate he would avoid the sick-bed and its ghastly atmosphere.

In ten days’ time his affairs were all in order, and he was at Liverpool Street Station with a ticket to a little port on the East Coast.

With one exception he had told no one of his sentence, merely saying that he had been advised by his doctor to throw up his work and take a holiday. There was one person, however, whom he felt he must see before he went. She was an old friend—a very dear old friend—who, if the Fates had been kinder, might have been something more. He had called on her, and

found her extraordinarily restrained and formal, which contrasted strangely with her usual very friendly welcome. After half an hour of the most frigid intercourse he had had with her during their thirty years of intimacy, he had been glad to go.

That same evening he had received a letter from her, couched in the most loving terms. It told him how she had recently dreamt of him as being in danger; how she had been continually thinking of him and worrying about him, and asked for immediate assurance that all was well. She added that he had been so constantly in her thoughts that, when he suddenly appeared she was quite upset and distressed, and to hide her feelings, of which she was rather ashamed, she was afraid she had been almost rude in her formality.

The letter affected Stayson profoundly. Not only did the telepathy argue a tremendous bond between them—a sympathetic dovetailing of minds,—but here was something right beyond the range of his experience.

He wrote back and told her all, enjoining her to silence.

“If we can feel for each other apart, death may hold out the rosiest of hopes,” he wrote; and from that time he often felt, suddenly and without conscious effort, that he was communing with her.

That was the first rift in the materialistic clouds, and it was destined to widen and

widen, until at the last the sun shone clear between.

That evening he was walking along the sea-wall of the muddy estuary, and the smell of sea-weed, the wind bearing the redshank's plaintive note from far away on the saltings, and the sight of the smacks scudding back to harbour, all awoke long-hidden memories of youth and laughter.

There, and in the parlour of the inn that night, talking to the old fishermen, he recaptured the spirit of an old love and glamour.

Next morning he was up early, and boyishly impatient to get down to the water-side. It was a bright sunny morning, and Stayson seemed to live at cloud-high level.

He enjoyed his breakfast in the old oak-beamed dining-room supremely,—every pull of his pipe, and each yard of the walk from the hotel down to the front, where he saw spread out before him every conceivable type of small craft, yachts and smacks, and launches and barges, lying either at their moorings or up on the muddy banks.

Whatever might happen afterwards, for a time he was going to enjoy himself thoroughly.

The sea—the mother sea—our home and element for thousands of years before we took on human form, called to him.

As is the case with most men, he could not worship the goddess direct—she was too impenetrable, so infinitely beyond conception; he could

only pour out his devotion on the hem of her robe. Ropes and sails and spars and tides and soundings would be, to him, as household gods henceforth; he would breathe in the air smelling of pitch and tar and seaweed, and that curious mixture of paraffin and brine peculiar to the cabins of small boats.

He sought out a boatman he had known of old, and found him splicing wire-rope in a long low shed, full of blocks and coils of rope and other nautical stores.

To Stayson's surprise the boatman, Jackson, after a steady scrutiny, remembered him.

"Yes—I remember. Yes—you was the young gentleman who smashed the boom on the *Curlew*. You didn't ought to have risked it."

Stayson laughed. To be remembered after twenty-five years solely for a mistake in judgment struck him as amusing, and rather characteristic of the world.

He explained his wants to Jackson, and together they rowed out to see the boats that were for sale. The first one was too big—a ten-tonner. It would take three at least to handle her, and, of course, he must be alone.

The second one seemed the very thing. A small ketch of about five tons, with a cockpit aft leading into quite a roomy little cabin. She was comparatively new, too—five years,—and was lined with teak. She had a nine-foot beam,

drew five foot odd, and was, in all probability, a good sea-boat. It was a case of love at first sight with Stayson, and he closed with Jackson at once.

As he was being rowed back to the stage he arranged about repairs. She must be thoroughly overhauled and painted, and then there were a few details of extra lockers and spare sails to be seen to. Moreover, he wanted her quickly. Jackson saw to it that she was alongside the stage next high tide, and work was started on her at once.

For the next few weeks, until the boat was ready for sea, Stayson lived up in the inn, and came down each day, superintending and sometimes helping in the work himself.

He ordered the removal of a lot of ballast forrard, thereby earning the disapproval of Jackson. He had two water-tanks built in, one on each side of the cockpit under the seats. He enjoyed all the preparations to the full—and at times completely forgot.

There was always a small crowd of people—natives, long-shoremen or fishermen, or visitors—gazing down on the boat from the stage, either out of idle curiosity or airing their opinions as to her capabilities.

Stayson, with his cheery manner, made friends with quite a lot of them, but especially with one small boy, who asked him if he might be allowed to help in the work.

As a matter of fact, he was anything but useful, getting

in the way in the small cramped cabin, and asking innumerable questions; but Stayson recognised in him the true maritime instinct, and, on the few occasions when he did not put in an appearance, he missed him considerably.

One day the boy stayed down till it was getting dark, and his father, a harassed London clergyman, came down to fetch him home. Stayson felt an unreasonable annoyance that the boy should belong to some one else, but as he went away he shouted, "May I come and help you again to-morrow?" and in some measure that seemed to make up for it.

That was his great regret—he had no children. It made him feel his life had been a selfish one, and that he had failed to do that for which all creation strove—to pass on the gift of life.

To perpetuate oneself, and the woman one loved best, in one's children was to him an immortality of solid fact, and probably the only one that existed.

After that he got on friendly terms with the clergyman, and, accustomed as he was to a habit of keen observation, he could not fail to note what a struggle in life the poor man was having. Apart from that ever-watchful hungry expression of the eyes, which is also common to the wolf, the pariah, and the unfortunates of our cities, the overcoat frayed and worn at collar and cuffs, the pipe pulled impulsively out of the pocket and put back again

without being smoked, and, above all, the ingrained carefulness and almost awe-inspiring sense of money in the boy, all told their tale.

One day he went to tea at their lodgings, and met the clergyman's wife, who had been very ill, and on whose account the family had come down to the sea. She still looked far from well, but several times during the meal made a point of telling Stayson how perfectly fit she was, and what a lot the sea air had done for her. Stayson sensed that there was a financial difficulty about the holiday, for which reason she wished to terminate it, and that these remarks were for the benefit of her husband. He admired the splendid bravery of it all, and, like one looking on at a fight, felt rather insignificant and humble.

One afternoon Stayson was down on the boat, painting the cabin roof, when Jackson asked him what he was going to call her. Apparently by a double shift of ownership she had been left nameless. Stayson painted on a few minutes in silence.

"I'll call her the *Sarcophagus*," he answered at length. "Here—I'll write it down: put it in dark-green letters,—quite small under the counter."

Jackson had learnt by now that it didn't do to argue with Stayson, but it struck him that a boat whose name was painted dark green on a background of black might as well be nameless.

A few days afterwards she

was ready for sea, and Jackson, the clergyman, and the boy came out with him for a trial-trip. It was a fine sailing day, a nice fresh sou'wester giving them a soldier's wind. They sailed out to the open sea, and the boat rose jauntily to the small waves. There is the very essence of life in the movement of a small sailing-boat, responsive to each puff of wind and each movement of the tiller, and meeting each wave with a cheeky buoyancy. It struck an answering chord in Stayson and his guests, and it was a delightful day of jollity and picnic. Going home up the estuary the boat was put through her paces, hove to, jibed, and sailed as close into the wind as she would go. Stayson was thoroughly satisfied with her performance, and even the taciturn Jackson muttered approval.

For several weeks thereafter Stayson sailed the boat every day, threading his way up half-forgotten channels between muddy banks, or going out to sea to those highways of the world where steamers passed, bound to and from every port from China to Peru. He enjoyed it thoroughly, tossing about with the sea-birds, his only companions.

Then one day, after a particularly hard day's sailing, he had another prolonged coughing fit. He had been warned by his doctor that it would probably recur, so he was not surprised. But he took his lesson from it. Next day he ordered stores from London,

sufficient to last him two or three months, and spent the day getting things ready for an early departure.

When the stores came they made a goodly pile in the shed, and Jackson looked askance at it. There was something in Stayson's manner that forbade him questioning; but now, among other things, he understood why some of the ballast had been taken out.

That night they loaded the stores into the *Sarcophagus*. Stayson insisted on it being done after dark, as he did not wish to draw the attention of the inevitable lookers-on. They carried tins of biscuits and meat and game, choice wines and spirits, and all the necessities and luxuries for a long voyage. It was midnight before they finished, and everything was snugly stored away, and Jackson, reflecting on a "fiver," was thankful he had not exhibited any curiosity.

During the night Stayson had two bad coughing bouts—painful and distressing—and felt far too weak to think of starting in the morning. So he just stayed in his bunk, for he was living altogether on the boat now, and listened to the silvery sounds of the tide, cutting past the mooring chain and swishing along the sides of the boat.

The boy rowed out in the afternoon, and Stayson felt absurdly glad to see him. Provided a boy is not shy he makes a most excellent companion, for he will alternate a great volubility about

his own affairs with a very candid curiosity about yours.

It was chiefly of his own that he talked this afternoon. The family were going back to London in a few days, and Stayson needed to put only a few questions here and there to confirm his conjecture as to the reason.

"Mummy says we must go back, but me and daddy and the others doesn't seem to want to."

"Well, I'm going away to-morrow too, old chap. Will you come and see me off—about high tide—ten o'clock?"

The boy eagerly assented, and Stayson took him home, calling on the way back at the bank, where he had had his account transferred, and making arrangements with the manager for the withdrawal of nearly all of his not inconsiderable balance.

Next morning he was up early, and everything was ready for sailing. After his breakfast he rowed ashore and settled up with Jackson, and stood talking to him until the boy arrived.

"Well—good-bye, old fellow, and mind you grow up a good sailor."

He shook his chubby little hand, and gave him an envelope to give to his father. It was one of the last knots he had to cut, the severance from things worldly, the parting from his worldly goods.

It seemed a little thing to Stayson, a sort of good-humoured whim, but he knew it would be seen as the helping

hand of God by that little family. In some measure it seemed to atone for a selfish life—and make him a participant in the struggle of creation. At any rate he had his reward, and the mental picture of that little figure waving to him from the sea-wall was with him to the end.

Jackson rowed him out to the *Sarcophagus*, and then left him, for he had determined to take no dinghy with him.

The anchor was soon up, the sails set, and he was away, a fair north-east wind carrying him down the beloved estuary. An agitated piece of white in the distance told him the boy was still waving to him; but when at length that was lost to sight, being a man of fibre, he resolved on not looking back. There should be no regrets; he would only look forward to where the mystic horizon lured him on.

The whole country was under the benign influence of an anticyclone, and the north-east wind held all the sunny day. That night he hove-to within sight of Dover, the tide drifting him down Channel. He sat contentedly in the cockpit, smoking and watching the French and English lights. It had been a glorious start to the last great adventure. It could only have one end, but much might lie between now and then. He felt the touch of Drake and Raleigh and all the old sea captains, and fell asleep that night reading the 'Voyages of Columbus.'

For seven days he coasted

down the Channel—pleasant sunny days, marred only by an occasional coughing fit.

On the eighth day out he took his departure from the Lizard, and headed south-west. "Next stop—South America," he said aloud; and the little boat, with her boom right out, rose gamely to the long smooth Atlantic swell.

For several days he sailed on peacefully and without incident. Sometimes he would sight a steamer and once a few trawlers, but otherwise he seemed to be alone in the centre of a quietly heaving and gigantic circle, whose circumference was the clear-cut horizon. He would heave-to at night under a mizzen and foresail, and cook delightful little meals, and read and sleep. Books and Bacchus made a splendid combination, and gave him fellowship and content, while the gentle motion and the sound of tumbling waters lulled him into slumber.

Thus for some time he was content in a lazy sort of happiness, and would dream in that detached way only possible to one halting, as it were, between life and death. Much was clear to him then which had been hidden, and in an almost superhuman way he saw men and matters in truer perspective. One night, before turning in, he noticed the barometer was falling, so he was not surprised when he was woken up at dawn to hear the sails flapping wildly on deck, and the boat pitching and rolling, and sending all

the loose objects in the cabin—pipes and plates and forks and books—in a restless and confused heap on the cabin floor. He restored order within, then went outside to find a fresh south-west wind bearing low blackish clouds over a white-splashed sea of wonderful grandeur.

He took in all sail and put out his sea-anchor, and the *Sarcophagus* rose like a sea-bird to the long swell with its foamy wind-driven top. It was a glorious motion; up—up—the long dark-green hill, which seemed to tower above him; then for a few moments in a boiling snow-white pinnacle, with spray flying all around; then down, down into the dark valley, as the huge wave swung onward to break many a mile away,—one after another in endless succession—merciless, irresistible, yet majestic.

Stayson sat in the cockpit, fascinated by the primeval fierceness and beauty of it all. He wondered he was not afraid—he knew he would have been very afraid in ordinary circumstances. Instead of that, he was surprised to find himself enjoying it—exhilarated as he had never been before. The cruel grandeur of the scene seemed to strike some answering chord in his manhood. He laughed aloud, and the wind, shrieking through the rigging, seemed to laugh with him. He felt absolutely incapable of feeling any fear, and mused on the subject.

Perhaps the instinct of self-

preservation had left him now, as it was no longer needed to protect a valueless life. That would be just like Nature to take away an instinct, when its utility had gone. Yes, that would account for some reckless acts of bravery he remembered, and many suicides, and in some degree justify them. At all events it was very, very merciful. Was it just incidental, or could it be an ordinance of a divine mind? Or it might be for a purpose—that Nature used up such as he, the moribund, for her desperate enterprises—thereby saving the fit. How he wished that this voyage of his—undertaken entirely for personal reasons—could have some object of sacrifice.

The wind, increasing all day, blew half a gale that night, and although the movement of the little boat was terrific and made sleep quite impossible, still she kept fairly dry.

Once or twice Stayson had to pump, for even spray accumulates, and the exertion brought on the coughing. In spite of this he was wonderfully content, and sitting wrapped in his oil-skins huddled up in the cockpit, gazed almost lovingly at the long ravening waves as, one after another, they tore past him out of the darkness.

For three days and nights he remained hove-to like this, and the lack of sleep and exertion of pumping were making him very weak. All the time he was drifting before the wind, and going back to the English

shore. Then, on the fourth morning, although the wind and sea were still high, the sun suddenly broke through. Stayson, who had been wondering if he was ever going to see it again, felt very glad. It seemed symbolic—it gave hope that there still might be something ahead. He stood up in the cockpit, steadying himself against the cabin roof, and looked round on the wild rugged seascape.

Then an object caught his eye. About half a mile away he caught a momentary glimpse of something black. He crawled into the cabin and got his glasses, and after a while he saw it twice again. It looked like a boat.

It was still very rough and risky for sailing, but he determined to chance it.

He double-reefed the mizzen, and put a storm-jib on. Then he went forrard and got the sea-anchor in. It seemed to take ages, and brought on some coughing. He hurried back to the tiller, and got there just in time to prevent the boat getting broadside on. He had taken a rough compass-bearing of the black object, and edged his way towards it. The *Sarcophagus* made heavy weather of it, and shipped a good deal of water, but Stayson had luckily shut the cabin doors. With his left hand he started bailing out the water in an old tin, while his right grasped the tiller and took the waves as much on the bow as possible. It had been touch and go for a few minutes, but gradually the danger passed.

Then he saw the object again. Undoubtedly it was a boat. He wondered if there was any one in it. An intense longing to speak to some one came over him.

At length he ran up alongside the boat, and the two banged and crushed together. Stayson saw two jersey-clad figures lying huddled up together in the bottom of the boat. He shouted, but they did not stir. He saw they were lads—fishing lads—for on the stem of the boat was carved “S. T. Rose.”

He caught the boat’s painter, which was tied to some floating planks of wood and oars—a rough sea-anchor. He cut it with his knife and made it fast, and the trawler’s boat swung astern of the *Sarcophagus*. Then, with a tremendous effort to be quick, he got his sails down—and put his sea-anchor out. Both sails were half in the water, and the ropes were lashing about with fury—but that didn’t matter just yet.

With feverish impatience he pulled the boat alongside the *Sarcophagus*, having put two fenders over the side, and tumbled into it. He anxiously turned the lads over on their backs: their faces looked cold and blue and dead, but they were breathing.

“Thank God—they’re alive,” he shouted.

One opened his eyes, but shut them immediately. Stayson climbed back into the *Sarcophagus*, and got a bottle of whisky from out of the

cabin. He got back to the boat, and forced some of the spirit between the boys’ lips. Some of it was swallowed, but most of it went to join the water which was washing backwards and forwards in the bottom of the boat.

At last one of the lads regained a partial consciousness, and Stayson, by encouragement, entreaty, and force, managed to get him into the *Sarcophagus*’s cockpit. It took him about an hour, and he had three coughing fits, but it was done at last.

Then he drank half a bottle of spirits himself, and went back for the other. He was absolutely inert, and Stayson was unable to lift him. Once, in trying, he was thrown over the side of the boat into the sea by the tremendous pitching. Luckily he caught the gunwale, and dragged himself in again.

For a few moments he was absolutely thwarted; then he got an inspiration. He unhooked the mainsail peak hal-yard, and, putting the hook under the boy’s belt, hauled on the rope. The lad came up bent double, and, swinging with the movement of the boat, was dumped on deck. Eventually he had them lying side by side on the cabin floor; there was too much movement for them to stay in the bunks. Stayson longed to lie down and sleep himself, and prayed aloud for strength. He rested and coughed awhile, then ripped the sodden clothes from off the lads, and covered them with blankets. Then one of

them spoke, something indistinct, and Stayson felt supremely happy. He got the primus-stove going, and made some hot grog. They both drank some of it, drowsily and only half-conscious. Then Stayson went out on deck to get things straight before night-fall, and before his whisky-given strength gave out.

He cut the trawler's boat loose—it was no use now,—tied up the shreds of sails that remained, and then collapsed in the cockpit. Some time afterwards an icy dash of spray brought him to, and he went down into the cabin. Both lads ate what he gave them—biscuit, tinned salmon, and marmalade, the first things that came out of the locker.

Stayson asked them how they came to be alone in the boat; and bit by bit, and with prompting, he got their story.

They had been in the wheel-house of the trawler *Rose*, while the rest of the crew were having their breakfast. That was three days ago. It was a pretty rough sea, and they had not got their gear down. They were just lying broad-side on, as trawlers always will, unless the sea is very bad, when they had to go ahead into it and burn coal. Suddenly a big wave swept right over her stern. Some of it must have gone down into the cabin, and they thought some water must have got into the big carbide tin, which was kept at the foot of the companion. Anyway, the first thing

they knew was a shoot of flame coming out of the galley door. They heard cries, but could not do anything. The cries stopped very soon—and the whole of the after end of the trawler became a blaze of flame. When she was sinking they launched the boat and got into it. The words came out drowsily, and it seemed as though they were talking in their sleep.

Stayson listened to them with his head close down to their faces, for the noise outside was appalling.

"If anything happens to me in the night," he shouted, "steer north-east—north-east."

One boy nodded slowly, then turned over and slept.

As night came on Stayson watched over them with an almost motherly solicitude. They slept deeply, and Stayson, worn out, wet through and utterly tired, himself fell into a fitful slumber, sitting propped up half in the cabin and half in the cockpit.

Towards dawn he awoke to find that, although the sea and wind had gone down considerably, he was sitting in several inches of water. The boat must be making water. That banging about alongside the trawler's boat must have started a leak. Slowly, and with infinite pain, he dragged himself to the pump. He pumped for an hour that seemed like a century. Every nerve and muscle and sinew seemed to shriek aloud for mercy, but the inexorable mind held on. He grew light-headed, and once he saw a woman helping him

press down the handle of the pump, and talking to him, encouraging and comforting.

Whatever may be the explanation, certain it is that in far-away London a woman lay sleepless all that night, consumed with a feverish anxiety for him.

At length the water went down beneath the cabin floor, and Stayson got the stove going and cooked some food. Both the boys ate; then, as they still seemed dull and sleepy, he let them lie. When he went out on deck again, it was nearly light, and he could see land astern. It was high land, and one or two lights were twinkling on the cliff top.

With a supreme effort he got the mainsail and foresail up, then cut the sea-anchor rope. Then he turned the ship landwards, just as the edge of a fiery red sun cut the horizon; he felt as though his body were dead, but his mind was supremely happy.

Two thoughts ran through his brain, indistinct but absorbing. One a sense of accomplishment and justification, the other—the lawyer habit of thought—there was too much, too long a series of coincidence for it to be just chance. Could it be just chance that had snatched him from his busy work in London, sent him out into these long grey wastes of sea to arrive at a crucial moment, and to be the instrument of saving two young lives from destruction?

The divine hand was at last apparent.

An hour later he was outside a little harbour, and a motor fishing-boat was coming out between the two jetties.

Stayson waved to the man, and he came almost alongside. The sight of Stayson told him that he was dealing with extremities.

"I'll tow you in," he shouted.

He threw a rope, and Stayson grabbed it, and, climbing painfully forrard, made it fast.

A prolonged coughing fit seized him as he was coming back. He half fell into his seat in the cockpit, then raised his hand as a signal that he was ready. The motor-boat started, and Stayson kept the yacht in her wake.

The sun was well clear of the horizon now, and Stayson gazed longingly on his native land.

It seemed as though he was returning to her in a blaze of glory, and God seemed very good and near.

The launch puffed fussily between the pier-heads, and the yacht followed her faithfully into the smooth water of the harbour. Then the launch turned to the left to bring her to the anchorage, but the *Sarcophagus* went straight ahead, and was pulled up with a jerk.

"Starboard yer helm," shouted the fisherman, "starboard like hell."

But the hand that gripped the tiller was already growing cold, and the last voyage ended.

MY FRIEND THE SHEIKH.

NOT long ago a brief and casual reference was made in some of the newspapers to the death of Mubarak, Sheikh of Koweit. Few readers saw in this an allusion to one mesh in the network of British, Turkish, and German diplomacy and intrigue in which the Bagdad Railway was involved. To myself it was the news of the death of an old friend, and of a remarkable man who ranked high among the sheikhs of modern Arabia. What part he played in the Great War I do not know; he must, from his proximity to Basra, have been to some extent involved in the Mesopotamian operations, and, if so, I feel sure he was our staunch ally. But my recollections of him are of earlier date, and I record them here as a small memorial to a great man.

The town of Koweit lies on the border of the Arabian desert near the head of the Persian Gulf. Behind it stretch leagues of sand; in front is a large desolate sheet of water enclosed in a bay, which forms its harbour. From the deck of a ship lying in the bay nothing meets the eye but the sea horizon all round, except where, to the south and west, a long low strip of sand is visible, broken by a group of brown, clay-built, flat-roofed houses which form the town. A more dreary and uninterest-

ing spot could hardly be imagined.

About a dozen years before the world-war broke out it was my destiny to dwell for some months in this desert harbour in command of one of His Britannic Majesty's cruisers, which I will call the *Stella*. The circumstances that brought the cruiser there need not be set forth in detail; suffice it to say that this strange and almost unknown harbour of Koweit was at that time a storm-centre of European diplomacy. For the great railway that was then slowly crawling across Asia Minor from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf needed a port for its terminus on that gulf, and what harbour was more suitable than this of Koweit? The question as to who controlled, or was to control, this sand-surrounded sheet of water became one of vital importance.

The territory in which the harbour lay, ruled over by the Sheikh of Koweit, was claimed by Turkey; the Sheikh repudiated this claim, and asserted his own sovereign independence. Germany, intensely interested in the matter, supported the Turkish claim, and, moreover, made strenuous efforts to obtain from the Sheikh the lease of a site for the railway terminus on the shore of the harbour, but without suc-

cess, for the Sheikh was under an agreement with the British Government not to dispose of an inch of his territory without their consent.

It was on account of this state of affairs, and the complications and intrigues attending it, that the *Stella* lay there, week after week—"a painted ship upon a painted ocean,"—alone in exceeding loneliness, waiting and watching for events. It was summer, and the heat was intense. The ship was floating in hot water; from a cloudless brazen sky the sun beat down mercilessly from sunrise to sunset; the air quivered with the heat vapours ascending from sea and sand. It was not until the fiery red globe was sinking below the horizon that one could venture out from under cover.

One day, soon after my arrival, as evening came on I landed, with some officers, to call on the Sheikh, using a steamboat for the passage to the shore, for the ship lay three miles distant from the town owing to shoal water. There were no piers or jetties, and the boat could only approach to some fifty yards from the beach. Several fine Arab horses were waiting for us, and these were led into the water so that we could mount them from the boat, and so land dry-shod. This we did as rapidly as possible, for the smells on the beach were appalling, and constrained us not only to hurry but to smoke cheroots furiously while landing.

As we left our boat behind

us we left with it the twentieth century and all its works, and found ourselves plunged into the days of Haroun-al-Raschid and the 'Arabian Nights.' I had visited many remote and almost untrodden parts of the world, and everywhere I had found some traces of Birmingham and Manchester, of something European or American; but here in Koweit I could see nothing of such origin: all was purely Oriental and apparently archaic, with one exception—firearms.

The town, with a population of 15,000, was large and far-spread; the houses all of brown clay or mud, square-shaped and flat-roofed; the streets very narrow and tortuous; the bazaars typically Eastern, displaying no fine treasures, however, but the simplest necessities of life in the shape of food and clothing required by an Arab population. The town was walled all round except by the shore, and had but one gate, opening upon the desert; and outside this gate were camps of wandering Bedouins with their horses, camels, and sheep.

A short ride from the place where we had landed brought us to the Sheikh's palace, a house differing little from the others except in size. In an outer courtyard a number of grave and stately Arabs were seated; they were dressed in the flowing robes of the Bedouins with the invariable head-dress of red and white cloth, bound with a double

band of camel's - hair cord. These men rose respectfully as we passed them and entered an inner courtyard, whence we mounted a flight of steps leading to the flat roof above. Here were more Arabs, apparently of higher rank, one of whom came forward to greet us, and led us into a room built on the roof. This was the Sheikh's reception-room and council-chamber, a large and airy apartment looking out over the roof below upon the harbour and surrounding country. A Persian carpet was on the floor, and divans, chairs, and small tables formed the furniture.

As we entered, Sheikh Mubarak met us, shook hands, and invited us to be seated. Two of the principal Arabs had come in with us; the remainder stayed outside. All treated the Sheikh with the utmost awe and respect.

His appearance justified this attitude. Sheikh Mubarak ibn Subah—to give him his full name—was a man of about sixty years of age, of medium height, though he looked taller in his flowing Arab dress, which was similar to that worn by the others. Under the projecting folds of the head-dress a strong, stern, hawk-like face, with a pair of very shrewd penetrating eyes looked out; a grizzled grey beard failed to conceal a firm mouth. His bearing was dignified, but friendly and courteous, and I saw that here was a man who could be as firm and faithful

a friend as a determined and relentless enemy.

It was, of course, to be expected that he would be friendly towards me, for I was there to support him in his independence and to defend him from aggression. And during the months I was at Koweit he and I remained firm friends.

Coffee was brought in by a dark-skinned attendant; it was served in small cups without handles, and was poured out of a huge brass pot with a very long projecting curved lip. Conversation was maintained by means of my interpreter, Abdullah, whose knowledge of Arabic (like Sam Weller's of London) was "extensive and peculiar," for he had accompanied several caravans of pilgrims across Arabia from the Persian Gulf to Mecca.

At the farther end of the reception-room an archway gave access to an inner room, where the coffee was prepared, and one of the doors from this inner room led into the Sheikh's private quarters and harem. This room will be mentioned later in connection with an interesting incident.

My first visit to Mubarak closed with friendly farewells, and he placed his horses at the disposal of myself and the officers whenever we wished to ride, an invitation of which we were glad to avail ourselves. It became my regular custom to land every evening at sunset, mount a beautiful mare called "Wazna," caparisoned in a purple and silver saddle-

cloth, ride through the narrow streets of the town and through the maze of the crowded bazaars, emerge through the gate, and go for a gallop over the desert, returning at dark for a cup of coffee and a talk with the Sheikh before going on board.

Mubarak himself never visited me on board the ship, but I had frequent visits from his son, Jabur, and his vizier, Hadji Ali. Jabur was a fine-looking, thick-set, black-bearded man, who was on excellent terms with his father, and seemed to me a "chip of the old block." Hadji Ali was a crafty-looking old fellow with one eye, which he certainly kept wide open. From frequent conversations with these two, as well as with the Sheikh, I soon became aware of the network of intrigues with which Mubarak was surrounded. The Turkish authorities at Basra (backed from Constantinople and from Berlin) were inciting Abdul Aziz Ibn Raschid, the Emir of Nejd, the territory adjoining that of Mubarak, to attack the latter, who was an old enemy of his, promising Turkish co-operation. No doubt their object was to create a pretext for Turkish intervention and a further assertion of sovereignty. It was also reported from Basra that the Turks would make an attempt upon Koweit by sea, while Ibn Raschid attacked by land.

In addition to these political enemies, Mubarak had some bitter private enemies at Basra

consequent on the circumstances of his obtaining the position of Sheikh of Koweit. These circumstances make a story worthy of the 'Arabian Nights,' and were related to me by my interpreter, Abdullah. It appeared that when the old Sheikh, Mubarak's father, died, a dispute arose as to the succession. Mubarak considered himself the rightful heir, but his two brothers (probably by a different mother) proclaimed themselves joint-Sheikhs, and took the direction of affairs into their hands. In these wilds of Arabia there is only one law—that of the strong arm,—and Mubarak had no means of appealing against the self-asserted claim of his brothers. He could only bide his time, gather adherents, and await an opportunity. His brothers feared him, and it came to his ears that to avoid further trouble they had decided to assassinate him. There were only two courses open to Mubarak—either to fly from the country, or to forestall his brothers. He rejected the first and determined on the second. How he carried it out was thus narrated to me by Abdullah:—

"One of the brothers, called Mahmoud, lived in a house near the Mosque; the other in another house not far away. Now there was living in Mahmoud's house a man who was a very religious man: every morning, before sun get up, he go out of the house to say prayer at the Mosque, and he leave the door open till he come

back. Now, Mubarak he know this. He says to Jabur, 'You go to the house of Hassan (that was the other brother) and be ready with your rifle; when you hear my rifle go off, you shoot Hassan.' Very early in the morning, before the sun get up, Jabur goes to Hassan's house (he knows the way in) and waits. Mubarak wait outside Mahmoud's house. Soon he see the religious man come out and go to the mosque, leaving the door open. So Mubarak goes in through the door and goes up on the roof, where Mahmoud sleeps. He sees Mahmoud sleeping on the bed, and his wife with him and a little child. The wife hears him and sits up in the bed, very frightened. Mubarak says to her, 'Go away and take the child.' She goes away with the child, and Mahmoud wakes up with all this talk, and sees Mubarak with his rifle in his hand. 'What do you want, Mubarak?' he says. Mubarak says, 'Mahmoud, I have come to kill you. Say your prayers.' For you know, sir, when a Mahommedan is going to kill a man he always lets him say his prayers first."

"Quite right," I interjected.

"So Mahmoud say, 'La Ilaha ill-Allah' and say his prayers, and then Mubarak shoot him dead with his rifle. Then he listen and hear another rifle fire, and he knows Jabur has killed Hassan. So he goes out and he and Jabur go to the gate and call all the people there and tell them Mubarak

is Sheikh, and the people shout because they are glad. So Mubarak was Sheikh of Koweit."

This summary and truly Oriental method of obtaining his rights led, of course, to bitter enmity towards him on the part of the murdered brothers' relatives and friends, who migrated to Basra and there helped the Turks in every possible way in their intrigues against Mubarak and Koweit. Mubarak himself, though popular with his people and with neighbouring Bedouin tribes, lived in constant fear of assassination, and when no British ship was in the harbour, never slept in the same place throughout the night. He would retire to rest, but soon afterwards changed to another part of his palace, so that no enemy could be sure where to find him. But as long as a British cruiser was lying off Koweit he found this unnecessary, and passed peaceful and undisturbed nights.

But he was always in danger. Here is another little 'Arabian Nights' story. Mubarak was entertaining some Bedouin chiefs one day in the reception-room I have before described. Coffee was brought in, but just as it was being poured out, Hadji Ali came close to Mubarak and whispered in his ear, "Do not drink this coffee; it is poisoned." Mubarak, unmoved, calmly said, "Get another man and have fresh coffee made," and continued his conversation with his guests.

Hadji Ali, it seems, while

watching the making of the coffee (unknown to the slave who was making it), had seen the door leading into the harem open very slightly, a woman's arm extended through it, holding something in the hand, had heard the woman's whisper, "Put this in the coffee," and had seen the slave take it and put it into the pot.

"What was done to the slave?" I asked Abdullah.

"Oh, they take him away and kill him," he replied.

"And the woman?"

"She only a woman, so they not kill her; they send her away."

I had heard that Mubarak, after disposing of his brother Mahmoud, had annexed his harem; whether this was true or not I cannot say, but it seems quite possible, and if such was the case the action of this woman can be accounted for.

Mubarak had a small son called Hamid, a beautiful little boy of about six, with great liquid eyes like those of a gazelle, who used sometimes to be with the Sheikh during my visits to him. It was evident that the grim old man was devoted to this child, and I wondered what the mother was like and where she came from. None of Mubarak's wives, of course, could be seen, and though we met many women in the streets and bazaars they were so heavily veiled and muffled up that it was impossible to judge either their faces or figures. Riding along

the shore one day I passed a number of women and children bathing in the sea, and though the former kept their faces veiled even in the water they were not so chary as to the rest of their persons, and it could be seen that their skins varied from almost ebony blackness to almost European fairness, so presumably many races were represented.

About eight miles from Kuwait, on the sea-shore near the entrance of the bay, stood an Arab fort, which I was anxious to see. I asked the Sheikh if he would allow me to visit it with some officers and let us have some horses and a camel to carry our provisions. To this he willingly agreed, and offered further to provide food for us; this I declined, saying we would bring our own, and asked him if he or his son Jabur would join us.

Having made our preparations, a day or two later I left the ship at 4.30 A.M. with three officers, a marine servant, and Abdullah the interpreter, and on landing repaired to the Sheikh's house, where Jabur informed us that the Sheikh himself was coming out with us, and would drive in his carriage. Soon afterwards Mubarak appeared, and so did his carriage—an Indian "gharry," and the only wheeled vehicle I saw in Kuwait. At 5.30 we started off, the Sheikh driving, the rest of us riding, and after passing through the town were soon galloping over the desert. The Sheikh was accompanied

by three or four of his men—picturesque figures in their flowing robes, with rifles in their hands and bestriding splendid Arab horses.

Once on the desert there was no holding our horses in—they flew like the wind; and all we could do was to hold on and look out for sand-holes, which were numerous, and which the horses avoided very cleverly, but sometimes with disconcerting abruptness. For miles we galloped over the brown sand, undulating here and there, and bare except for occasional thin tufts of grass or small crawling bushes, which appeared to be all the food available for the numbers of black sheep and goats that we saw. Now and then we passed a Bedouin encampment or a few travellers on camels or donkeys, bound for Koweit.

At 6.30 we arrived at the solitary fort, and were not sorry to dismount and sit in its shade, for the sun was already very hot. Soon afterwards the Sheikh arrived in his gharry, followed by the camel with our marine servant and provisions. We were about to unpack our breakfast when Mubarak interposed and (rather to our dismay) informed us that he had brought breakfast for us. We compromised by laying both ours and his out on the mat on the ground which formed our breakfast-table in the shade outside the fort. The Sheikh's contribution consisted of large pieces of cooked meat and an enormous pilau of rice, highly

spiced. These looked well-cooked and appetising, but were so freely fingered by the attendants, who tore the meat to pieces with their hands, that we were a little reluctant to begin. Politeness, however, obliged us to conceal our feelings, and we fell to with smiles. In my turn, I offered the Sheikh some sardines; he regarded them with deep suspicion, but politeness again obliged: he tasted a little, but no more; he preferred his own style of food, using his hands to eat the meat and rice. He did, however, unbend so far as to eat some of our strawberry jam with his meat. Throughout the meal, notwithstanding the absence of knives and forks and other civilised implements, he behaved like a thorough gentleman, and with perfect dignity and courtliness of manners. It is, indeed, impossible to describe the dignity and stateliness of Sheikh Mubarak at all times: his gravity and self-possession; his slow and stately walk; a fine old figure in his long Arab robes and flowing head-dress.

He had brought with him little Hamid, who did full justice to the meat and pilau, and also showed a deep appreciation of our strawberry jam and mixed biscuits.

After breakfast and a smoke we retired inside the fort to avoid the sun. The fort stood on a mound in the desert; it was square in shape, each side about sixty feet in length. At each corner was a square tower

rising slightly above the walls ; each tower surmounted a room, with no windows but with a doorway leading into the inner courtyard. In one of these rooms we established ourselves for the day, the Sheikh and Hamid retiring to another. There was no escape for us ; the courtyard was ablaze in the sun and cut off from any breath of breeze ; to go out into it or outside the fort was to enter a furnace, for the reflected heat from the ground beat upwards as fiercely as the sun beat downwards.

The horses were tethered in the courtyard under the full blaze of the sun ; I appealed to the Sheikh on their behalf, but he said they were quite used to it.

Within our windowless and nearly airless room we remained all day—a day that seemed endless. It was too hot to sleep ; we could only sit on the mats, talk, smoke, and drink ; fortunately a deep well outside the fort furnished deliciously cool water, which cooled our soda-water.

The tedium of our long wait was for a time relieved by a musical entertainment provided by a melancholy-looking Arab with a kind of fiddle possessing one string, and capable apparently of producing only one note, which the player varied with an occasional trill, turn, or shake. To the accompaniment of this monotonous instrument the player and another Arab, in melancholy and nasal tones sang, the subjects

of their songs, according to Abdullah, being the following—

1. Song of sorrow.
2. Song about women : how, when their husbands tire of them, they must be banished.
3. Camel song : sung by camel-drivers when travelling by caravan.
4. Song about a horse.

There were several more songs, but we were too tired to ask what they were about. The subjects were no doubt of pleasing variety, but the tune and manner of singing were always the same, and after an hour of it we had had enough, and dismissed the two Calenders with bakshish.

After having some tea we packed up, and at 5.30 P.M., to our immense relief, started on the ride back to Koweit, where we bade the Sheikh good night, and returned on board after an interesting expedition, but one we were not at all inclined to repeat.

Time passed uneventfully at Koweit, with many rumours, however, of Ibn Raschid's war-like intentions and movements, until August, when a cloud of black smoke appeared at the entrance of the bay one day, heralding the approach of a Turkish man-of-war. As I suspected her of aggressive intentions, I ordered steam to be raised in readiness for a move. When within some five miles of Koweit she stopped, and appeared to have anchored. After watching her for some time, I thought it advisable to

see what she was about, so I weighed anchor and steamed down the bay towards her. As we approached, I saw that she was again under way and heading for Koweit. I steamed past her, then turned and followed her until she anchored off the town, when I anchored near her; then, getting into my boat, I went to call on the Turkish captain. I was received with due ceremony and a guard, but the Turkish captain was ill at ease, and not inclined to be friendly. He led me into his cabin, where we sat and held conversation with the aid of my interpreter, Abdullah, during which I observed that the skylight over our heads was lined with a row of villainous-looking Turks, who made no attempt to conceal their interest in our proceedings. The Turkish captain was not disposed to be communicative as to his reasons for visiting Koweit, and said he had merely come to call on the Sheikh. Knowing full well the Turkish feelings towards Mubarak and their claim of sovereignty, or at least of suzerainty, over Koweit, I felt it my duty very politely to tell him that if he attempted to land any men or exercise any force against the Sheikh, I would feel it my unpleasant duty to prevent it by force. He took this rather scowlingly, but repeated that he had no intentions of that kind.

I did not trust him, however, and after leaving him I went ashore and told the Sheikh of

the conversation I had held, requesting him to show a bold front and not to be intimidated by threats, and promised to keep an eye on the Turkish ship and to prevent any aggressive action. Returning to my ship, I found a thick mist creeping over the harbour, and saw that during my absence the Turk had moved his ship farther away from the *Stella* and nearer to Koweit. So I ordered the anchor to be weighed and followed the direction taken by the Turk until I again saw him through the mist, and anchored near him. By this time darkness had come on, and I arranged to have our searchlights directed upon the Turk and kept on him through the night, which passed peacefully.

Early the next morning the Turkish captain was seen to be on his way to the shore to call on the Sheikh, and an hour or two afterwards to return to his ship. Then he came to call on me, and was received, of course, with due form and ceremony. In my cabin he asked for my name and the name of my ship, and informed me that he was returning to Basra, and would report my conduct to the Sultan of Turkey.

"Of what do you complain?" I asked. "Of the actual communication I made to you, or of my manner of making it?"

"Both," he replied.

"If my manner was wanting in courtesy," I said, "I much regret it, but what I

said had to be said, and if you wish to report it, well and good."

So we parted, civilly but coolly, and the Turkish ship soon afterwards steamed away to Basra. I heard afterwards that I was duly reported to the Sultan, who complained to the British Government, but I heard no more on the subject, having sent in my own report of the affair in the meantime.

The Sheikh, when I called on him later, told me that the Turkish captain had threatened him with dire consequences if he failed to acknowledge the Sultan as his sovereign, but that he had not budged in his attitude of independence. He also told me that all through that misty night the whole length of the beach was lined with his men, armed with rifles, under Jabur, in case the Turks should attempt a surprise landing in the mist and darkness.

Uneventful weeks passed by, during which I rode nearly every evening for exercise, and also made with the Sheikh certain arrangements for the defence of the town against attacks by land, selecting various points where guns (which could be lent from the ship) might be placed, and ascertaining the positions of the wells from which the town obtained its water supply to ensure their being covered by the guns of the ship.

Those rides were always enjoyable, for the bazaars were interesting, the narrow irre-

gular streets with great wooden doors, sometimes carved, leading into the windowless houses, were surprising and mysterious; the market-place outside the gate was a mass of moving colours, with numerous Bedouin Arabs, veiled women, and quaint little children. At this gate the Sheikh sat early every morning with a guard of soldiers, to administer justice, hear complaints, and receive dues paid to him by visiting Bedouins. Wandering through these scenes was, as I have said, a realisation of the days of Haroun-al-Raschid in Bagdad. It was a pleasure, too, to bestride Wazna, the most lovely Arab mare that could be imagined, with her skin of satin, her splendid shape, and beautiful eyes; full of spirit and fast as the wind, yet docile and obedient to a whisper. My affection for Wazna was a constant source of amusement to the Sheikh, and before I left Koweit he offered her to me as a gift, which, of course, I was unable to accept.

In September I had to take the ship to Kharag Island for a few days to carry out target practice; on returning to Koweit, I was astonished to see, through my glasses, as we approached our anchorage, that the desert surrounding the town was covered with enormous numbers of flocks, camels, horses, and Bedouin tents, which had not been there when I left Koweit a week before. Something was in the wind. Hadji Ali, the one-eyed, came on

board as soon as we had anchored, with a message from the Sheikh to tell me that the forces of his enemy, the Emir Ibn Raschid of Nejd (egged on, of course, by the Turks) were within three days' march of Koweit, and that he, the Sheikh, was consequently assembling all his fighting men.

Matters were looking serious, and I sent a message to Bushire to inform the senior naval officer there of the situation, in the meantime awaiting events with the intention of supporting Mubarak if an attack should take place. The next day, hearing that he was going to review his forces, I landed in the afternoon and called on the Sheikh, who was waiting for me before riding out to the review. Full of the expectation of fighting, the old chief was in the highest spirits; I had never seen him unbend and talk so much before; and he was delighted to have me and the officers with me to accompany him, for, of course, our presence added to his prestige.

After sherbet, coffee, and cigarettes, we mounted our horses. The Sheikh rode a splendid white horse, with gorgeous trappings, and headed the cavalcade, which was preceded by a large escort of Arabs armed with rifles. We followed the Sheikh, and behind us came numerous Arabs on horseback and on foot. Our progress through the streets and bazaars was striking. All the Arabs had donned their

brighest garb to do honour to the occasion; red, orange, and light brown were the prevailing colours. The escort marching in front and singing loud sonorous war-songs, stretched across the street, clearing a way for us; the people drew back into doorways and corners shouting cheers to the Sheikh; the veiled women waved their hands and cried in a continuous shrill squeak, "La-la-la-la-la!" Every man we saw, except the blind or helpless, even old grey-beards, carried a rifle.

We emerged from the town upon the open desert, which, as far as the eye could see, was black with people. In the centre were numerous armed men, who attached themselves to our procession; on each side as we advanced were thousands of women, maintaining their shrill "La-la-la-la!" without ceasing. Ahead of us we saw a mass of men with banners of red or green, bearing Arabic inscriptions, waving over them. As we approached, we found these men were drawn up in long lines, not very regular, but with some attempt at formation, and we rode along these lines. Sheikh Mubarak, a proud and noble figure on his white horse, at our head. As we passed, all the men—wild with excitement—danced, waved their rifles, and yelled, making a terrific din, to which drums loudly added. Most of the men looked wild and barbarous, with long hair stream-

ing in the wind, but many of the older ones were fine-looking old patriarchs, reminding one of pictures from the Bible. The dancing, which resembled the motions of a man compelled to stand on hot bricks—*i.e.*, alternate feet raised rapidly—looked comic, especially in the case of venerable old gentlemen, grey and portly, with the aspect of Moses and Abraham. In front of our escort, as we moved along, a pair of mounted Bedouins would wildly gallop, meeting each other half-way and firing their rifles in the air as they passed each other—an exhibition of Arab warfare.

It was a wonderful and rare spectacle. There must have been at least 10,000 people scattered over the plain, and their devotion and loyalty to Sheikh Mubarak was clearly evident. Returning to the town after the review, the old Sheikh, over coffee and cigarettes with us, was immensely pleased and elated, as well he might be, and expressed himself as ready to tackle Ibn Raschid or any other sheikh in Arabia.

Soon afterwards we heard that Raschid, who had advanced to within a few hours' march of Koweit, had, after helping himself to a few hundred sheep, retired to a distance, evidently scared by the news of Mubarak's warlike preparations.

My news of these events had brought to Koweit two or three additional cruisers to assist in its defence if required, and

for some weeks we were all busy in making preparations for that purpose, both at Koweit and at Jehara, a place at the head of the bay which formed an advanced position of defence, where guns were landed and placed, and some of Mubarak's men instructed in their use. Guns were also mounted in dhows, to form armed patrols along the shore.

All these preparations, aided by diplomatic action (which resulted from them), led to the abandonment—at least for a time—of aggressive movements on the part of Ibn Raschid and the Turks, and peace again fell upon Koweit.

In October I sailed for another part of the station, expecting (and, to tell the truth, hoping) never to see Koweit again, after four months of such heat and discomfort—on which I have refrained from dwelling—as I had never experienced before. But it was with genuine regret that I parted from my friend the Sheikh. Our close intercourse for four months had led to a mutual understanding and friendship that almost amounted to brotherhood, and it was with genuine emotion that Mubarak bade me farewell.

But in the following January the Turks were again becoming aggressive towards Mubarak, and the *Stella* was ordered to proceed from Bombay to Koweit. On our arrival there we found three other British cruisers, and the arrangements

for the defence of Koweit and Jehara remaining in full force. The Turkish sloop *Zohaf*, with which I had had the encounter previously narrated, had again called at Koweit, bringing this time a high official from Basra with a peremptory message purporting to be from the Sultan of Turkey, ordering Mubarak to go to Constantinople and ask pardon for his presumptuous conduct, in which case he would be permitted to remain as Sheikh of Koweit, but if he refused, he would be banished. Needless to say, Mubarak, supported by the British naval officer on the spot, declined the invitation, and the Turkish official went off in high dudgeon, vowing vengeance. The Sultan later on denied all knowledge of the affair.

The Turks, finding threats useless and hopes of direct attacks vain in the presence of British cruisers, now adopted a more subtle method: they began a policy of gradual encroachment on the outlying parts of Mubarak's territory. This was a clever policy up to a certain point, for the exact boundaries of this territory were not clearly defined.

We had again to wait and watch events. I spent most of this time of waiting at Jehara, where the Sheikh had temporarily taken up his quarters. He received me with the greatest affection, and we had some long talks on the subject of his enemies and their methods and intentions. I rode with

him round his camp, which was pitched in the desert outside the village of Jehara, and which included about 100 tents, with some 1500 men.

The Sheikh's favourite pastime in winter was the ancient sport of falconry, and I should have greatly liked to accompany him in one of his hawking expeditions, but the times were too busy for him just then. To occupy our spare time, the weather being now cold, we laid out a golf-course in the desert, and played frequently, to the amazement and amusement of the Arabs, some of whom we enlisted as caddies. It was amusing to see a grey-bearded and dignified Arab of patriarchal aspect engaged in this occupation. Our chief trouble was that every day on returning to our links we found that all the jam-pots, tins, &c., which we had placed in the "holes" had disappeared. These were evidently regarded as great treasures by the natives of the neighbourhood, and as fast as we replaced them they were stolen.

I was playing golf one day when an Arab came to me with the news that a small party of Turks had pitched their tents a day's march from Jehara, in Mubarak's territory. The Sheikh had then returned to Koweit, but I had an interview with his cousin, whom he had left in charge at Jehara, and with another Arab Sheikh, who was one of the most strikingly handsome, as well

as intelligent, men I had seen in this country of fine-looking men. While the latter was explaining to me, by tracing in the sand, the position and routes likely to be taken by the Turks, a dust-covered Bedouin arrived, who had seen the Turks at a place called Safwan, which they occupied, and had ascertained that they had sent a party to occupy another place, nearer Koweit, called Um Kasr; both these places Mubarak claimed as his.

These matters were referred to the British Resident at Bushire, and through him to the Indian Government, to be settled if possible by diplomacy. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, protested strongly against these encroachments of the Turks, but without any immediate results. On the other hand, Ibn Raschid had ceased to be a menace to Mubarak, having to confront a rebellion in his own country.

After a month at Jehara I was again ordered to Bombay, and went to pay my last visit to Sheikh Mubarak in his palace at Koweit. During my previous absence he had built a new reception-room on one of the higher terraces of the building. It was a more gorgeous apartment than the old one; open on all sides, with jalousies of polished wood; the ceiling decorated in red and gold. The handsome Persian carpet had disappeared—Mubarak was now so British in his feelings that nothing but an English carpet

would suit him; and the floor was covered with a costly but hideous Kidderminster production, which he had procured at great expense, and of which he was immensely proud.

I bade a warm farewell to the fine old Sheikh, to his son, Jabur, to the faithful Hadji Ali, and my other friends. They had all filled me with admiration and respect for the calm dignity and perfect courtesy they had invariably displayed during the many months of our intercourse, in times of excitement as well as of peace. And towering above them all in my memory is the stern and stately figure of Sheikh Mubarak.

I never saw him again, but heard of him from time to time: how the Viceroy of India had called at Koweit in a man-of-war of such a size as had never been seen there before, and had presented the Sheikh with a sword of honour; how Mubarak had been made a Knight Commander of the Star of India and a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire; how his prestige had vastly increased; how he had bought a yacht and cruised about the gulf; how he had given battle, with his allies, the Wahhabis, against Ibn Raschid and driven him back to Hail defeated; and how the Turks had ceased to molest him. A British Political Officer had been established at Koweit; British steamers called at the port regularly; trade had increased, and the town

had greatly extended. During the Great War Indian troops were camped at Koweit. Then came the announcement of Sheikh Mubarak's death, full of years and of honours.

What Koweit will be in the future now remains to be seen. It may, perhaps, some day be the terminus of the Bagdad Railway, after all, and develop into a great commercial port.

Meanwhile it appears to be becoming prosperous and civilised. That means, no doubt, that it will soon possess policemen, newspapers, motor-cars, beer-houses, gramophones, advertisement hoardings, moving

picture-shows, and other blessings of our civilisation. But I like better to think of the days when it was a living bit of the Arabian Nights Entertainment; when I rode through the dusky bazaars and out through the gate to the desert on Wazna, most beautiful of Arab mares; when I listened to the doleful music of the two Calenders or the stories of Hadji Ali the One-eyed; and when, at the close of each burning day, I sat on the palace roof drinking coffee with my friend the Sheikh Mubarak ibn Subah, now gathered to his fathers. Peace to his ashes!

THE RETARDATION OF THE ABBEY CLOCK.

BY H. W. S.

"LOOK here, Martin," said the Old 'un—he was aged fourteen, and was so called because his brother, a year younger, was known as the Young 'un—"Logan and those chaps were up the Abbey last week. I vote we go."

"Yes—let's," said the laconic Martin, one of the innumerable Martin Leakes who have been at Westminster School for generations, and have served their country nobly in peace and war. His pleasant freckled countenance and ever-present grin, and his good forward play at footer, made him a general favourite. To him, and Paddy Kaye on the left, the Old 'un played a faithful half-back game, passing with that precision and devotion which are the highest merit of a good half-back. They were now wandering, hands in pockets, in the shadows of the Abbey cloisters, pouring scorn on their house-master for having stopped their leave. It was a "Sat.-Sun.-Mon.," or Saturday to Monday holiday, and most of the boys had gone off on three days' leave. The two stood gazing up at the great flying buttresses and pinnacles of the south side of the Abbey, and at the slender scaffolding rising above the lofty clerestory windows, by means of which the work of restoring the weathered

stone facing was being carried on.

"We'll get Paddy Kaye," said the Old 'un, "and"—he hesitated—"let's get Grills,—he's a good climber. I've climbed tons of trees with him at home." Now Grills was in College, and therefore, although the same age as the other friends, was on an intellectual plain of great elevation; hence the doubt in the mind of the Old 'un. At the same time he greatly revered that worthy on account of his family's intimate connection with the Royal Navy, and of the many happy holidays the Old 'un had spent with him and his brothers.

"Right—oh!" said Martin, and that settled it.

"Monday there'll be no workmen on—it's a bank holiday or something,—we'll go then. I'll get the others," said the Old 'un.

Next day being Sunday, the boys from their seats in the choir stalls gazed up in anticipatory delight at the mysterious and lovely galleries of the triforium, the narrow passages across the tall clerestory windows above, and the still more exciting ledges across the great rose-windows of the transept.

The outside world can little realise the extent to which the Abbey enters into the life of

the boys brought up under its shadow. The great south transept is their morning chapel. Beneath Henry VII.'s gorgeous fan vaulting they are confirmed, and they hear year after year the choir sing Sterndale Bennett's imperishable harmonies in "God is a Spirit." Under the immense arches of the nave the boys take part in every ceremony: they help at the burial services of the great; they are part of national thanksgivings; and even at coronations they take an active part with the leaders of the Empire in the national ceremonial. There, between the organ and the choir, they learn to know the masterpieces of English Church music, and from thence they carry in their hearts through life the echoes of the harmonies, the fugues, the solos, and the great chorales which make Wesley, Purcell, Barnby, Stainer, Martin, Cole-ridge-Taylor, and many others friends and household names to them. There, too, wandering between school-hours with cherished friends among the tombs and monuments of England's kings and queens and greatest men, they learn and realise that the history of England is not a precarious procession of separate epochs, but a gradually growing whole, a service to which all are called in greater or less degree in their own time and generation.

There, seeing under their eyes the evidence of the ordered continuance of life and work and struggle that has gone to

the building of our England, they first learn that the game is greater than the player, and that work and duty are the watchwords of Empire.

In the course of their varied wanderings at odd times among the aisles and chapels, they find ever fresh interest awakened. New boys wander in frankly curious and somewhat awed. But by degrees the spirit of the place asserts itself, and as a boy goes up the school and the years pass, it seems to dominate and possess him with a sense of its mystery and divineness. It becomes an embodiment of the history of England, of which the boy himself feels he is a part—a great and visible crystallisation of the years, linking the humblest boy with her greatest past. And when the boy comes to his last day in the Abbey, it sends him forth to work "for this Church and Nation" with a secret in his heart like a consecration—at once a blessing, a command, and a faith.

Ever after in his life the Westminster boy carries with him a certain feeling of possession, of intimacy and of understanding, between himself and the spirit of that great fane. However broken by the fevers, wars, or hardships of life, he returns from time to time from his distant post, to renew there the aspirations and thrice-blessed friendships of his boyhood, and to draw from the Abbey's inexhaustible store of encouragement, of promise, and of exhortation.

The four boys who gathered in the cloisters on that Monday afternoon were filled not only with the excitement of the adventure and curiosity to penetrate those lofty mysteries of which they had heard whispered stories from those who had ventured on the quest, but also with a certain sense of the inevitableness of their response to the call upon their imaginations exercised by the ever-beckoning fingers of the familiar pinnacles and turrets.

Paddy and Martin were out as scouts to ascertain that all was quiet in the cloisters; the canons in residence who would take the afternoon service were still at lunch. The Clerk of the Works office was securely locked. Not a soul moved. "Bags, I first!" said Grills, as he and the Old 'un surveyed the scaffolding ladders. As the climbing powers of Paddy and Martin were not known, it was arranged that they should go next, the Old 'un bringing up the rear.

It did not take them long to reach the topmost ladder, and step on to the staging on which a number of ready-dressed stones were resting, level with the parapet of the roof.

From here the Old 'un, having on one occasion been thus far before, became the officer in command of the expedition. Led by him, they dived into the small door which leads in from the parapet beneath the great peaked roof, between it and the stone vault of the nave.

Turning westward, they found their way at length to the North or Clock Tower. Having climbed to the summit and studied a bird's-eye view of London with exclamations of approval and delight, they started down the narrow, winding, pigeon-infested stone stairs.

An exclamation from the irrepressible Paddy, whose mischievous faculties were now thoroughly awake, brought them up suddenly. He was inside the great clock.

In this most delectable of places he found, among other matters of interest, the regulating mechanism. After careful examination of the arrangements, and a lecture thereon from Paddy, it was proposed by Grills, and carried with acclamation, that each member of the expedition should put back the clock one and a half minutes exactly — total, six minutes.

"They'll find it out," said Paddy doubtfully. "Of course they will," said Grills, who had calculated the results with lightning precision, "but not till after we are down. Three o'clock has struck, and service has started; no one will notice now till to-morrow."

In another minute the horrible unbelievable thing was done. The whole Abbey clock with all its striking arrangements, instead of leading Big Ben by a comfortable two minutes, so as to get its quarter-chimes finished before he could drown them with his booming notes, was now lagging hope-

lessly behind. The Old 'un showed distinct signs of funk. "It's leaving too much of a trail," he said.

"Oh, rot," said Martin with his cheerful grin; "think of the Head to-morrow at twelve o'clock prayers when the clocks strike all wrong."

This reference to the head-master was ill-omened in the opinion of the Old 'un, and his spirits fell considerably. They were duly restored when it was suggested that some one should walk out on the ledge under the east clock face, and write the names of the expedition on the hour-hand. The only thing that prevented this was that it was discovered that the hour-hand was too high at 3 P.M. for any ordinary boy to reach it. There being no minute-hand, this objection proved fatal. The feat was, however, successfully performed by the fearless Martin one evening a little later, when the hour-hand had reached the 6 o'clock position.

"Here, let's go and listen to the service in the lantern," said the Old 'un, to whose cautious mind their position on the roof parapet was too exposed for safety, the place being in full view of the public and the police in Broad Sanctuary.

He led the way beneath the roof again, and along the wooden stage that runs the whole length of the stone vaulting. At the eastern end an iron door opens into that dim, mysterious, and magic place

where the nave and transept vaultings meet. It is lit by narrow corner-windows whose stained glass, looking out between the roofs, admits a soft uncertain light. Beneath the doors opening from the great roofs runs a widish stone ledge all round, and beneath the ledge is space, into which the massive fluted piers fade into the depths of the great church beneath.

The door opened with a clang, which startled them all for the moment. Then, as the immensity of the depth beneath them and the wonderful distant visions became apparent, each boy drew his breath in awe and delight.

They heard the choir singing the last verses of the Psalms to one of those unique Abbey chants of Turle's, with the last high treble note that goes soaring and echoing into the vast spaces and seems to search out their very soul.

There came up to them the rustle of the congregation sitting down, followed by the small distant voice of the canon reading the lesson. They listened and looked in silence. Then suddenly their beloved organist let loose the great organ in the opening phrases of the Magnificat, and the men's voices came up in the splendid opening bars of that grandest and surely most truly inspired of evening services, Walmisley in D minor.

It would have been all the same to Paddy if it had been Rule Britannia or the Old

Hundredth. He was frankly not musical. But his eyes glistened when the trebles arose and smote the echoes around the lantern, vanishing serene and pure in the dim distances. The boys stood, each in his own way caught by the majesty of the echoing harmonies ; they listened breathless to the end, to the beautiful quartet, "He, remembering His Mercy." Something new and inexplicable gripped the Old 'un by the throat. He felt he could not stay : he turned back into the dark. As the last major Amen died away, "Come" was all he could say.

They were very silent and subdued as they stumbled back along the wooden gangway in the dusk beneath the roof. This would not do ; the Old 'un shook himself. "Now for the triforium, you chaps ; that's where the old armour and helmets and spears are. We've got to go outside and down the south transept turret."

They turned out through the door by which they had first entered the roof, the Old 'un going in advance as scout. They were coming out into the open on the south side now towards the school ; they might be seen from the cloisters, from the Deanery windows, or from Dean's Yard — innumerable places. Their Eton jackets were pulled over their wide collars, as these articles of attire are regrettably conspicuous at times. However, all seemed quiet, and with all rapidity possible they crouched

and ran along the guttering inside the parapet, going east towards the outside of the lantern within which they had so recently been, and turning along the south transept. Here the little turret door admitted them to another winding stairway which took them down and down, passing a door which led to the clerestory passage, which was locked, until they reached an entrance to the triforium.

Before searching for the armour which was one of their objectives, and which was believed to be in this part of the building, they decided to do the farthest explorations first. The Old 'un was insistent on the importance of reaching the eastern triforium beyond the transept, and for this purpose it was necessary to cross the narrow ledge below the great rose-window of the south transept, in which they were. A small hand-rail makes the passage of the window quite safe, the only danger to be apprehended being from the vergers down below. The small figure of a boy, however, is difficult to see from below unless the person happens to be looking at the window.

The orders were, "Watch the verger in the transept (if any). When his head is turned away, run across. If he turns round or looks up, stop dead, and wait until he turns away again."

They had to wait for the last prayers of the service, and then when the organ started

its usual orchestra-like voluntary, the Old 'un stepped out on to the little ledge and ran lightly over. He was followed by Martin, who watched the verger fussing about below, and giggled audibly. Then came Paddy. He simply made a bolt, and never looked down once. The verger's head came round suddenly, and four startled pairs of eyes looked down upon him from behind the lovely columns of that perfection of design, the triforium arcade. He looked away, and Grills nipped across.

The boys had a great ramble in the eastern end, up to the apse they had so often gazed at from below, until they decided to retrace their steps and seek out the armour they had heard so much of. It was believed to be old ceremonial armour kept for use at coronations, and dating from great antiquity. But all they could find, after once again venturing the passage of the great window, were some very dirty helmets, some round shields, and a set of blunt-ended spears. Paddy immediately put on one of the helmets, and in stentorian tones challenged Martin to a combat with spear and shield.

They had two bouts at one another, when Martin took off his helmet, saying it was too hot and dirty. His head and face and clothes were such a mass of dust and dirt that Paddy rolled about with laughter, and his helmet, tumbling off 'ere any one could catch it,

fell with a reverberating crash upon the stone flooring.

"You idiot," ejaculated the horrified chorus.

Paddy himself was a sight to make the gods laugh, but no one felt like laughter with the echoes of that fearful betrayal still in their ears.

"Come on sharp," said the anxious Old 'un; and dusting their clothes as they went, all made hastily and as silently as possible for the turret tower. "We must get away down at once," he urged as they came out on the roof parapet. "Grills, you go first."

Crouching along the roof parapet they soon reached the wood staging, but just as Grills put his hand on the ladder, Martin called out, "Look out: there's old Pender and two men coming; they're half-way up. I can see his white beard."

"Quick; back under the roof," called the Old 'un.

They dived in through the little black door once more, and running along the wooden staging, the Old 'un jumped off on to the stone vaulting, and crept into a dark angle of the vault floor.

Here all lay down together in the dust of ages, which was a couple of feet thick in places. Some loose boards were pulled over them—then silence reigned.

Presently the voice of Mr Pender, the Clerk of the Works, was heard with that of another man. The little black door was opened, a ray of light shot in, and heavy footsteps came along the staging, while others ap-

peared to go to the far western end. How breathless and subdued the expedition now. The consciences of all were terribly alive about the clock; and if the vergers had heard that awful helmet, and were after them from inside, how would they ever get out? It meant a "swishing" certain from the headmaster, and a most unpleasant time from the Dean. Altogether things looked black.

But good luck! the footsteps returned towards the door—there was much ill-humoured talk. The door was opened, then banged definitely.

"What if they've locked the roof door?" said Paddy.

"No; they've simply got to wait for us at the bottom and take our names," said Grills despondently.

"Give old Pender twenty minutes," said Martin, "and then send out a scout. We might dodge him over the cloister roof. What's more, it'll be his tea-time soon."

That twenty minutes went very slowly; the expedition argued in whispers every possible plan for getting down, including staying where they were until midnight. But the unexpected always happens.

Grills went out as scout, and soon darted back. "All clear; not a soul to be seen."

This seemed too good, and hardly like their friend Mr Pender, who was accounted a redoubtable man in war.

It was Martin who solved the problem. "Be jabers," he said, "look, the ladders are

gone!" Holding on to the poles and looking down the scaffolding not a single ladder was to be seen. This was a facer. There was silence.

Then Grills up and spoke. "Look here—it's no use going down inside by the turrets; those doors will be watched. We are not watched here; the ladders are gone. Therefore we climb down the poles. Bags, I first."

"Just the same to me," said Martin.

"I'm going down inside," said Paddy stolidly.

"Oh, rot! Paddy," said the Old 'un; "it's no good giving yourself up. They'll try and make you give our names up too; it's quite all right climbing. It's potty on this scaffolding—no end of cross-pieces to hold on to."

This very lengthy speech produced the desired effect. Paddy nodded. "Go on," said he.

Grills stooped down, dangled his legs over the edge, turned over on his stomach, and slowly disappeared from view as his knees got round the pole. Each hand followed in turn, and he was gone.

Martin looked over to give the leader a good start, and then he followed suit. As his freckled countenance was about to disappear, he looked up and said, "What a lark to have the headmaster climbing down here." He hung on to giggle at the notion, and then proceeded. It was Paddy's turn.

Paddy was holding tight to one of the uprights; he was

looking fixedly at the roof parapet. "I can't do it," he said in a low voice.

The truth suddenly dawned on the cautious mind of the Old 'un. He remembered how Paddy had rushed across the great rose-window ledge, looking straight in front of him. He realised that Paddy with his heart of a lion had no head for heights.

"Look here, Pad," he said in eager tones, "it's quite all right. I'll go first. I'll place your feet for you; I'll hold your ankles. You need never look down; it's as easy as blazes like that, and there are good rope lashings every few feet to hold on to." With that he dangled himself over the edge, felt for and caught his pole with his knees, and so hung. Paddy looked down, and the Old 'un looked up. Two great tears gathered in Paddy's eyes and trickled down his dirty cheeks, making a long clean streak beneath each eye. From his cheeks the big tears fell splash on to the Old 'un's upturned face.

Then unexpectedly Paddy turned round, and next moment his legs were over the edge; the Old 'un caught a foot and piloted it to grasp the pole, then the other. "That's the style, men," said he, as if addressing the world in general. "Now slide down a bit—hand over hand's the word!—always keep tight hold with one hand—'one for yourself and one for the ship,'—British Navy isn't in it, gentle-

men. Here we go: aloft there! maintopmen on the weather royal-yardarm—look alive! any way, there's no sea on, governor—ship's steady as a rock. There's a cross-piece here, Paddy—topgallant yardarm. Wish the Dean could see us—he'd beg us to come down and be forgiven. To the right here, Paddy; there's a splice. Look out for that big splinter—hold the main spar—that's grand. More than half-way, my beauties. What price Mr Pender—hope he's not anxious. Blondin isn't in it with this here expeditio—"

So he chatted, slithering down, guiding Paddy's legs and feet to secure holds—directing, holding, warning. "If you're getting tired sit on this cross-piece a bit, Paddy."

"Rot; I'm not tired," said the indignant Paddy; and on they went.

And then suddenly, as it seemed, the flat cloister roof came up to them, and the Old 'un jumped off. Paddy came slowly down, and stood still, embracing the pole, but looking round with a broad smile of satisfaction. He looked at the Old 'un, and said in a low voice, "Thanks." That worthy blushed awkwardly, muttered something, and turned to where Grills and Martin were anxiously gazing down the remaining twenty-five feet into the cloister green. It was suddenly borne in on him that the greatest courage is that which impels a fellow to do what he's afraid of; and that was Paddy's.

"No scaffolding below here and no ladders," said Grills. "Only the wooden stone shoot—doubt if we can do that. Not a bit of rope or anything; we've hunted."

"What a chouse," grumbled Martin, "to be beaten at the end."

The Old 'un came up. "Can't go back. I don't like it, but think we'll have to try the shoot. It's mighty steep; may get a broken leg at bottom."

"Hist!" said Martin. "There are two chaps in cloisters; they'll help—whistle." There was such a chorus of whistling that the two fellows walking in the far cloister couldn't help hearing. They soon guessed where it came from, and came running round to the angle of the cloister.

"Quick," called Grills; "we're marooned, and can't get down. Get a ladder."

Everybody knows where the Clerk of the Works keeps his ladders in the dark cloister, part of the old Norman cloisters, leading to the school yard, and in a few minutes they came running with a light ladder, which they placed against the cloister wall. It didn't reach the top by several feet.

"Just reach it if we're careful."

"Must hand the men over the side," said the Old 'un. "Come on, Grills."

Grills climbed over the edge; the Old 'un caught his hands, and so they lowered him to the topmost rung.

"Got it," said he. "Gently now; but what about the last man?"

"Never mind—chance it—we've got to hurry," said the Old 'un.

Martin and Paddy were safely lowered and reached the ladder, and all three were safe on the green grass looking up at the Old 'un. There was no one to lower him to the ladder. Just then the distant note of Big Ben boomed out the quarter. The Old 'un did not waste time; he knew if he looked at it he would funk it. Over he went; his fingers and elbows gripped the coping desperately as his feet dangled for the ladder.

"Don't all talk—Grills, tell me," he called.

"Another foot and you do it—a little bit to the right," said Grills.

The Old 'un always said it was one of the worst of his moments. His elbows had to go: his hands clung desperately to the flat stone—he thought he was gone when his foot touched. Then the other—the rung was so close to the wall he feared he would topple over backwards. Slowly he let his hands come down the stone facing—his nose scraped painfully. One foot off—another rung down.

And then suddenly came the Abbey chime—clear, precise, and musical, and six good minutes behind time. The Old 'un started to laugh, he shook with it; the ladder rocked; no one knows how he came

down. With a rush and a crash and a roar of laughter he fell the last few feet on to the top of Paddy. They rolled on the grass in close grips, laughing and hitting one another. Martin fell dexterously on top of both, and Grills and the two rescuers rolled round in speechless delight. Grills was the first to come to his senses.

"Idiots," he cried, dragging at the combatants on the grass; "hurry—get the ladder away." That ladder never travelled so fast in its history, and just when it was hung safely in place, footsteps were heard coming out of Little Cloisters.

Grills adjusted his College gown, which had been hidden in a pile of masonry; the others dragged their collars outside their jackets, and slunk sedately along under the dark wall, talking solemn rubbish. Round the corner dashed the organist at his usual quick walk. He had given several of them an hour of his time at the Abbey organ before now, out of sheer kindness of heart and love of his instrument.

"Ah! Hullo, boys!—oh, ah! good night," and off he rushed.

"Good night, sir," said a pleased and emphatic chorus.

"Now, you chaps," said Grills, "sharp work and change; you're not safe yet. Meet here in twenty minutes." And away they dashed.

A veil may be drawn over the ablutions and the scrubbing and the mendings of wounds and scratches which

followed. In a remarkably short time the expedition was once more gathered, scrubbed, reclothed, and shining, in spotless collars and clean faces.

"You do look beauties," said Grills, "nice little boys, fit to go and talk to vergers and other nice people." He had to run for his life, but he led to the small west cloister door into the Abbey. Here he allowed himself to be caught.

"Pax," he cried, "no rot. Look here, we'll go in and see what's on. Ten to one old Pender is hunting for us still."

In they went, and the Old 'un at once spotted a verger standing at the little door that admits to the north tower turret. The expedition tiptoed across the nave, and then along the aisle behind the big pillars. They came out upon the verger, with hands in pockets, and with the most innocent expressions they could assume.

"Oh, good evening, Mr Jones," said Grills in his most ingratiating manner; "er—how are you?"

"You young gentlemen had better get out; it's late."

"Oh, is it," said Grills with the utmost innocence; "are you shutting the doors?"

"Yes, I am," said Mr Jones; "but we're catching some of you young gentlemen first what's gone up climbin' about the roof somewheres where they has no business."

"By Jove!" said Grills, "think of that! How are you catching them?"

"Well, Mr Pender's gone

up; he's after them. I thought they'd a' been down by now," added poor Mr Jones, looking wistfully at the door. Paddy was on the point of explosion.

"Who are they? Do you know?" said Martin, with his most winning smile directed on Mr Jones.

"That's what we'll find out," said Mr Jones.

To the cautious mind of the Old 'un this appeared to be tempting Providence too far—Paddy was beginning to roll. "Come on, you chaps," he urged in anxious tones. He took Paddy away down the aisle and stuffed a handkerchief into his capacious mouth.

"I say, one more visit—Stewart the little verger is in the north transept; we must just visit him," said Grills. "Mr Jones told me."

It did not take long to find Mr Stewart. He was walking impatiently up and down, his big gown swinging round him as he turned. His eye was constantly on the little dark door in the corner that led by endless corkscrew stairs to the upper mysteries of the transept.

"Now then, young gentlemen, out of this; it's getting very late. The doors have been shut this long time."

"Good evening, Mr Stewart," said the boys in turn.

"We're just going," said Grills; "will you walk along?"

"No, not now. I'm waiting here," nodding at the door; "I'm on duty. Some young gentlemen up above. Mr Pender's after them all right. They

can't get down the scaffold—he's took away the ladders. Ha! ha! They'll be coming down here any minute; I'm waiting to take their names—shown up to the Dean they'll be this time."

"Did Mr Pender see them or what?" said Grills.

"Yes, he see'd 'em all right, and they been making noise enough to wake Edward the Confessor himself over there in his tomb."

"Oh, come on," urged the cautious one again.

Outside in the school yard the boys, after a mad rush round cloisters, settled down to a four at rackets before tea. Martin, who was serving, suddenly stopped and looked round at the Abbey. "I say, you chaps," he said, "I'm sorry about old Pender; he's a good old chap, and he's had two long climbs and some beastly hard work after us to-day. It's rather rotten, I think. Hope he's had his tea anyway."

This was the working of Martin's kind heart.

No one answered, and they went on with the game. The idea had made a marked impression on the others. At last, as he took a hard full volley back-hander, the Old 'un said, "Well, I don't see that. We didn't invite him at all—it's his look-out,—and, anyway, he gave us a jolly good climb. I don't bear any ill-will over it anyhow."

"Nor I," said Paddy. "Let's go and tell him. He and the vergers are there yet."

"Ass," laughed Grills.

Next day as twelve o'clock approached there were several nervous boys in the lower forms; probably Grills in the giddy heights of the Shell had no such feelings.

Now it was customary as soon as the Abbey chime of noon was heard for form-masters to break up their forms in the various class-rooms, and to proceed with all boys to the great school for prayers. Here the headmaster would await them, and with all the forms lined up, and the masters kneeling down the centre, the monitor would read the prayers in Latin in accordance with invariable custom.

On this particular day none heard any Abbey chime. Suddenly unannounced Big Ben boomed through the startled noontide, bringing confusion to every class-room of the ancient foundation of Westminster. Masters interrogated their head boys; head boys interrogated forms; everybody was talking and comparing watches. All agreed no Abbey clock had struck.

There was a stampede of classes to the great schoolroom, where a figure of anger and impatience strode with long strong steps up and down the raised dais. The Head was in a rage. The Master of the Shell went up watch in hand. Far down the school certain three small boys watched events with anxiety on their faces.

At last the tension was relieved. The headmaster beck-

oned to the monitor, and in the moment's silence which preceded the opening prayer, suddenly came the Abbey chime clear, precise, and musical, and six good minutes behind time. The headmaster looked up from his attitude of prayer. Monitors looked at their watches. The Shell Master nodded, as much as to say, "I told you so." But the Upper Remove Master turned his head, and looked full in the blushing and ingenuous countenance of the Old 'un.

This same master a few days later, in a lesson on dynamos, suddenly whisked round on the Old 'un, and said, "How would you explain 'retardation,' let us say in the case of a church clock suddenly losing six minutes in a day?"

"Well, sir—er," stammered the Old 'un, pulling himself together with a desperate effort, "might be pigeons, sir; there are lots of them in church towers, sir."

"Call them doves—nice little birds. It is pleasant to see the young ones trying their wings."

The Old 'un always had an uneasy feeling about his form-master, whose knowledge was uncanny and his sayings incomprehensible.

"Didn't sound quite healthy," said Martin afterwards; "how much does he know?" But he never let on.

It need hardly be said that the retardation of the Abbey clock was corrected in due course.

It was a week later that

Grills summoned the members of the expedition to meet him down cloisters after school. "Look here, you chaps," he said—"I have just been told by my senior election (one of the head boys of the school) that the Clerk of the Works has presented the dickens of a report to the Dean and Chapter about the doings on the day of our expedition, he and the verger staff having been detained in a fruitless search until the unprecedented and scandalous hour of 9 P.M."

"Dreadful," said Paddy.

"Well, I'm really jolly sorry about old Pender," repeated the kind-hearted Martin; "it was bad luck on him."

"It is further stated," said Grills, "that in the discussion which followed a certain canon referred in scathing terms to the 'sacrilege' perpetrated by certain 'shameless boys towards the nation's monument.'"

"Oh Lor'!" said Paddy, shivering.

"Sounds like my M.P. uncle," said Martin.

"Shut up," said Grills.

"Then the Dean spoke in his gentle way—you know it. 'Ah! say not that, I pray you. I dare wager that those boys are as intensely jealous for our Abbey as any of our chapters this last hundred years.'"

"Golly, that's true: a shrewd hit, my masters," said Martin.

"He refused to ask the Head for any names," added Grills.

"Good for the Dean!" shouted Martin in delight.

"Not so dusty," said Paddy.

"For my part," said the Old 'un, "after that essentially just and perspicacious dictum, I shall always be disposed to regard deans with something approaching approval."

"*Amicum castigare*," began Grills in a threatening manner. "Ob meritam noxiam, in mœne est fascinus,"—this in his best Westminster Play manner.

"*Verum in ætate utile*," added Martin, giving the Old 'un a terrific crash on the head with an ancient Xenophon. He bolted precipitately up the cloisters, followed by the rest of the expedition in full cry.

MURDER DISQUALIFIES.

BY ALAN GRAHAM.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILE Francesca, in the hotel in Edinburgh, was celebrating her prospective victory over her uncle, a consultation was taking place in the manse at Dorning. Jean Rintoul was the most hopeless of the party.

"It's no use, Mr Murdoch," she said, breaking in upon a wild-cat scheme that the parson was propounding to the poacher. "We can't hope to get the better of my Uncle Rufus. I'm quite resigned to poverty, and I won't have you run the risk of jail on my behalf."

"Rats, my dear," retorted Mrs Murdoch, with unecclesiastical freedom. "Big Bill won't see the inside of a jail. There aren't enough police in the district to arrest him."

"An' they wudna interfere forbye," added Rab Wilson, who had attained to perfect ease of manner in his association with the clergy. "We'll ha'e ye in the Big Hoose in good time yet, Miss Rintoul."

"First, you have to get Uncle Rufus out," said Jean, with a smile of disbelief.

"That should be possible—even easy," said Murdoch. "If we can entice him out of the house, Rab and I can hold him between us while you take possession."

"It sounds too easy to be possible," objected Jean, with her rueful smile.

"You're a regular Dismal Jimmy, Jean," said the minister's wife. "If I were a prospective heiress I'm dashed if I would give up my claim so readily. I would——"

"Man, meenister, I believe I've got it," Rab Wilson broke in, careless, in the excitement of the moment, of the manners of polite society.

The plan, as Rab propounded it, was simple but apparently flawless, and was received with the enthusiasm it deserved, even by the pessimistic Jean herself. It did not, however, take into consideration a change in the occupancy of Dorning House. . . .

As a direct result of this consultation, McNeil, upon returning to the mainland from Meath in the early hours of the morning, accompanied by Televant and Lindsay, saw a thick cloud of smoke ascending from the neighbourhood of the newly-captured stronghold.

"Hullo ! " he exclaimed. "Is the house on fire ? Some of these damned fools—come on, boys ; run for it ! "

He started at full speed on the word, followed by his two companions. As they advanced

the smoke-cloud increased in volume, and as they drew nearer to the house, the shouts and cries of startled voices came to their ears.

"It's a fire, sure enough," panted Neil, with a half-turn of his head to the pair who laboured behind him.

A cluster of trees and shrubbery hid the house from him. In conveying Rufus to the sea the party had made a detour around this obstacle, but now McNeil led the way through the little wood, crashing through bushes and stumbling over the gnarled roots of trees in his haste. He knew that when he reached the other side he would be in full view of the house, and he had struggled almost to the fringe when, in shouldering his way between two thick-growing shrubs, he stumbled over something that struck less harshly upon his boots than had the stumps and roots of trees, and a moment later he crashed at full length amongst the bushes.

At the same time he heard a faint cry of alarm that was certainly not his own. He scrambled hastily to his feet and looked round.

"Miss Rintoul!" he exclaimed. "Whatever are you doing here?"

"Gathering nuts in May," retorted Jean. "Did you fall hard? I hope you did, because I'm not fond of being kicked in the small of the back by hobnailed boots."

She was crouched within a cluster of shrubs from which

she could look out freely, and without fear of discovery, upon Dorning House. A tight little hat concealed her pretty brown hair, and she was wrapped in a long blue cloak. She looked up at McNeil with an expression in which mischief struggled with hostility.

Meanwhile Televant and Lindsay had appeared, and the three men stood looking down upon the girl with puzzled faces.

"You're not here by mere chance, Miss Rintoul—of that I'm sure," said McNeil, with a puzzled frown.

Further speculation was for the moment prevented by renewed cries of alarm from the direction of the house.

"Televant—take charge of Miss Rintoul. I hold you responsible for her—safety," he concluded euphemistically.

He turned and looked out anxiously through the bushes. Sure enough, Dorning House appeared to be on fire. Smoke issued thickly from some of the lower windows, and on the lawn he could see his mistress gesticulating wildly while Bubbly and the others rushed around at her orders.

McNeil started out from the bushes and began to run towards Francesca, but before he could reach her, two tall figures darted up from a bed of rhododendrons and rushed upon her.

"Gad! It's Rab Wilson and the parson," exclaimed McNeil. "It's all a put-up job."

In a flash he saw the ex-

planation of Jean Rintoul's presence in the shrubbery, and as he ran he shouted, calling by name those whom he saw struggling with the fire.

Rab and Murdoch were striving valiantly to carry Francesca from the lawn to the neighbouring woods, but they knew that their effort was a forlorn hope. They had known it from the moment when, instead of the solitary figure of Rufus Rintoul, the house had vomited forth the retinue of Francesca Marinetti. Still, with Jean hidden near by, even a forlorn hope was worth the attempt, and so, choosing a moment when Francesca was separated as far as possible from her supporters, they rushed her, hoping that Jean might reach the house in the confusion and bolt it against all comers. The fire she understood, and could quench without difficulty.

They hardly realised the possibilities of Francesca. Rufus himself could hardly have put up a better fight; indeed, when one considers that she could scream and kick and scratch and bite, whereas Rufus would have contented himself with the use of his fists, it becomes doubtful which would have made the more formidable antagonist.

Nevertheless, left to themselves, Rab and the minister would have mastered her and, in the course of time, carried her off. McNeil, however, had succeeded in attracting the attention of Wilson and Owen to

the struggle, and these, with himself, were rapidly closing in on the would-be kidnappers.

The Reverend William Murdoch was the first to realise that the position was hopeless.

"It's no use, Rab," he gasped. "We're done. Let her loose."

"I'll no' be blate about that," replied Rab, releasing his hold, and raising a bleeding wrist, whereon the imprints of two perfect rows of teeth showed redly, to his lips.

Blood ran from the minister's cheeks, and he would have used a handkerchief to mop his wounds had leisure been granted him. The possibility of retaliation had not occurred to him, and Francesca's wild attack came as a complete surprise. She sprang upon him like a wild cat, and her furious onset overbalanced him upon the edge of the lawn, so that he fell backward upon the hard shingle drive. In a flash, Francesca had her long white fingers twined amongst his hair, and, her knees upon his chest, was busily beating the minister's head upon the stones.

"Oh that I had my stiletto!" she cried bitterly. "You would not outlive this insult."

Lucky, indeed, was it for Murdoch that, in donning man's attire, she had discarded the garter in which she concealed her favourite weapon.

"Come off, ye she-deevil," cried Rab, seizing her by the shoulders. "Ye'll ha'e the man's heid bashed in."

At the same moment help arrived from the enemy, and Francesca was dragged from her victim, breathing curses and threats of a terrible vengeance.

The Reverend William struggled to his feet and shook himself. Nothing less like a minister of the Church of Scotland can be imagined. He stood with a dazed expression upon his face, his hair ruffled, his clothing wildly disordered, and blood still running from the long raw tears upon his face.

"This is waur than war," said Rab, with a rueful grin; and turning to McNeil, who was, with Owen's assistance, holding back Francesca, who still breathed fire and slaughter, he added, "We're bate, Neil. We'd ha'e won oot if it had been Rufus, but we didna coont on this crood bein' in residence. Hoo did ye get in?"

McNeil smiled, but ignored the question.

"Yes, your idea was good," he said. "I dare say you would have managed to smoke Rufus out, and hold him while Miss Rintoul took possession. You are hardly to blame for not knowing he was gone, for we only turned him out in the night."

"Do not argy-bargy with such scoundrels, Major McNeil," exclaimed Francesca.

She stood with heaving breast, straining against the hands that held her, her dark eyes flashing fire and a flush upon her usually pale cheeks. Even in her wild rage she

retained her beauty and the rich fulness of her voice.

Across the lawn came Jean Rintoul between Televant and Lindsay. She had seen from her place of concealment that her friends' plan had failed utterly, and after a few words in explanation to her guards, she led them to join the party on the lawn.

McNeil was the first to observe her approach.

"Here comes Miss Rintoul!" he announced; and added indudiciously, "poor girl, she must be terribly disappointed!"

"You — you to say that, Major McNeil!" exclaimed his impetuous mistress. "Mio Dio! After all I have suffered, you take her part! I canna bear it."

With one of her wild transitions she burst into a storm of tears and threw herself upon the shoulder of the Honourable Thomas Owen, who withstood the impact with difficulty, and supported his mistress with every symptom of an early collapse.

"So we have failed again," said Jean as she joined the group. "Never mind, Mr Murdoch, you and Rab did all that was possible. Oh, you poor man, what *have* you done to your face?"

The sound of her rival's voice roused Francesca from her melting mood. She drew herself to her full height, and, with the tears of self-pity still glistening upon her face, looked upon her cousin with mingled hatred and contempt.

"Yes; you have failed again, as you deserve to fail," she began. "How dare you look me in the face, you mean underhand slut, that would have your bullies carry me off so that ye might step into my rightful inheritance! You are no better than a shameless hussy, or you would not dare stand there and look me in the face. I've a mind to deal with you as I have dealt with your priestly lover."

But for the restraining grip upon her arms there is no doubt that Francesca would have converted her verbal into a physical attack. McNeil, however, and, in a half-hearted fashion, Owen, held her back.

"Hang it all, Signorina," protested the former. "There's nothing to get mad about. After all, Miss Rintoul and her friends have only tried to do to us what we have already done to your uncle."

"And you say that is nothing to be mad about!" retorted Francesca. "I am not mad. I am justly angry at such perfidy, and now at you—who are a traitor. You take her side—the side of that wretched chit against me—Francesca Marinetti!"

"I'm not taking her side," said McNeil, vastly uncomfortable in the ridiculous circumstances, and wishing himself anywhere but where he stood. "But what's fair for one is fair for the other. The best thing you can do is to come back indoors, Signorina.

The fire is out by now—if there ever was one."

"It's oot richt eneuch," chuckled Rab Wilson. "Ye'll ha'e a lot o' cleanin' up tae dae, an' a wheen windies tae get mended; but there's nae real hairm done."

"You should be made to pay the damage," began Francesca again, but McNeil interrupted.

"Come, Signorina; you are doing no good. Come back to the house."

"Major McNeil," said Murdoch, who had by now recovered somewhat from the jarring of his brain, "many thanks for rescuing me from the lady, and also for your courteous treatment."

"Ay, meenister, Neil's a richt," agreed Rab. "But as for her—weel, after a', I'd rather fecht her than mairry her."

In explanation he looked meaningly at his wrist, where the teeth-marks stood out lividly.

"Good morning, Major McNeil. Thanks for sticking up for me," said Jean Rintoul with almost a friendly smile, as she turned to go with her supporters.

"Next time, I hope I may kill at least one of you," declared Francesca with a cold intensity that was more impressive than her rage.

McNeil sighed as he walked with her back to Dornig House. With how much more heart could he have played his part, he thought, if it had been Jean

Rintoul and not this hot-blooded virago, whom he was engineering into a fortune. His loyalty fought viciously with his inclination, and Francesca was instinctively aware of the battle. She gave her attention wholly to the Honourable Thomas Owen, who swelled visibly in the sunshine of her approbation.

Yet with all his bias towards the losing cause, McNeil could not deny the physical charm of his mistress. The very preposterousness of her costume only rendered her the more bewitching. The free swing of her limbs beneath the loose-fitting breeches and tunic, the absurdity of the coarse boots upon the little feet, the rakish angle of the toque upon her charmingly poised head—everything about her appealed to him—except her temper.

Bubbly was idiotically rhapsodical, as were the bulk of her staff. Those who had not participated in the scene that had just concluded, awaited her upon the steps of Dorning House, eager to welcome her back into her own. With her instinctive sense of the dramatic, she was aware of their

feelings in advance, and approached the house with the air of a disputed sovereign returning to her own. Caps were raised, faces lighted with enthusiasm, and spontaneously the retinue rose to a triple cheer that sent the wood-pigeons circling into the air in vital alarm.

"Honourable Bubbly," exclaimed Francesca, pausing at the foot of the steps, "Guid kens, this is the proudest moment of my life. Now I enter into my own. I do not fear my Uncle Rufus. We have tied him up safe and tight. I do not care for her whom we have just left. She is a harmless chit of a child who cannot do me any mischief. Besides, I have my loyal band of heroes, of whom you are the greatest. I fear nothing, not even the traitor in the camp."

Her voice fell as she uttered the last words. Her supple body stiffened, and she turned her face slowly, implacably, towards Neil McNeil, who hung half a pace behind.

"Traitor!" she cried, and mounted the steps of Dorning Castle.

CHAPTER XX.

The few days that followed were anything but pleasant for McNeil. Francesca ignored him. Although nominally in command, he was in reality of no account. Good fellows as his associates were, who can blame them if, under petticoat in-

fluence, their manner towards him grew cold, and they avoided him wherever possible? They were all, even the matter-of-fact Lindsay, madly smitten with their mistress.

Neil was therefore left pretty much to himself, if not actively

ostracised. There was little to do now that the stronghold was captured, though, had his influence still been paramount, Neil would have arranged a continuous guard throughout the twenty-four hours. He refrained even from the suggestion, feeling certain that he would only be laying himself open to a rebuff, and a rebuff from Francesca was the equivalent of a knock-out blow.

Each morning after breakfast he rowed across to Meath and carried Rufus the necessities of life and such comforts as he asked for, which were few. The ex-Laird accepted his captivity philosophically, and his only requests were for books—the ten volumes of Wheatley's edition of 'The Diary of Samuel Pepys,' and the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, both of which McNeil obtained from the Dorning House library.

Rufus followed his instructions strictly, not coming down to the landing-place until his jailer had landed the stores and pushed off into security; but Neil quickly acquired the habit of hanging upon his oars within hail of the beach, and chatting with his prisoner.

Rufus apparently bore no grudge. He indulged his peculiar dry humour to the full, and prophesied the downfall of his niece with a confidence that his present predicament certainly did not justify. It may have been his own isolation that first aroused McNeil's sympathy; but whatever the cause, he found himself, as the

days went on, extending his parley little by little, until the few casual words developed into long conversations.

Otherwise life in the Big Hoose was exceedingly dull. It was a relief, therefore, when one evening about nine o'clock the Reverend William Murdoch was seen striding up the drive.

The temporary occupants had done themselves well, as they had become accustomed to do in the flush of their triumph. Ronald had engaged extra help for his enlarged house-keeping, and the cooking was excellent. Dinner was over, and coffee and liqueurs were being served by the impenetrable Ronald Aitken in the smoking-room, overlooking the lawn in front of the house. The Signorina Francesca Marinetti and her favourite, the Honourable Thomas Owen, occupied a window-seat of honour, and were the first to notice Murdoch's approach.

"The priest!" announced Francesca. "What can be his object? That hussy, my cousin, must have some new trick to play upon me."

"We must be careful—very careful, Signorina," said Bubbly with an air of great wisdom.

"It shall be as you say, Honourable Owen," replied Francesca graciously. "I would be lost without your advice."

A double knock sounded upon the outer door.

Ronald Aitken, who was busy with the coffee-cups, moved to leave the room.

"Do not go, Aitken. We must discuss our plans," Francesca ordered.

"Aw richt, mem, if it's your wull," replied the wrinkled little man submissively.

McNeil moved forward from an obscure seat, where he had been boring himself with an ancient picture-paper.

"Shall I see what he wants?" he asked quietly.

"Honourable Owen, what do you think?" asked Francesca, with hardly a glance at her fallen minister of state.

"I'll go myself," declared Owen with the air of a hero. "I'll put the door on the chain and talk to him through the crack."

"Go, then. I know that you will act for the best."

While Bubbly made his way, with just the slightest sign of unsteadiness to the front door, McNeil quietly sent look-outs to windows on all sides of the house, and to the back door. There might, he thought, be something subtle behind Murdoch's visit.

Meanwhile Bubbly had opened the door upon the chain.

"Good evening," he said, with a watery-eyed smile. "I'm pleased to——"

"Can I speak to the mistress—the *present* mistress of the house?" demanded Murdoch, correcting his words loyally.

"You see in me her representative. Anything you might say to her you can say to me with equal propriety. But aside from that, I'm very pleased to meet you—very."

Bubbly wore an imbecile smile as he leant upon the doorway and thrust his small shaven face through the opening.

"We've got ideas in common, sir," he went on, without giving Murdoch a chance to declare his errand. There's a little publ—hic—ation called the 'Better Land' that you probably read diligently. The leading feature—the lay sermon—is an idea of my own. I put my soul into that sermon, sir, once a week—once a week," he concluded impressively.

"If your soul is properly reflected in the weak-kneed slosh that I've seen in that tawdry periodical, then may God have mercy upon it," said Murdoch with extreme solemnity. "But I did not come here to discuss the gutter-press with you. I want to know what has become of Miss Rintoul."

"Reverting to the previous topic, you're perfectly right, perfec'ly right, my dear sir; but, Lord, how it sells! It grips them by——"

"Will you tell me what you know of Miss Rintoul's disappearance?" demanded the minister, whose temper was beginning to rise.

"I dunno what you're talking about," replied Bubbly. "But your manners are exhic-rable. A man of your cloth should know better than interrupt a gen——"

"Will you tell me what has happened to Miss Rintoul, or will you find some one suffi-

ently sober to answer a straight question?" demanded Murdoch, raising his voice almost to a roar in his anger and disgust.

His words carried through the hall to the smoking-room where Francesca and Neil, with the unoccupied members of the party, awaited the result of the interview. A look of alarm crossed Neil's scarred face as the significance of Murdoch's question reached his mind.

"Miss Rintoul disappeared!" he exclaimed. "I must look into this."

With long strides he crossed to the door.

"Stop, Major McNeil!" commanded Francesca, starting to her feet, and throwing out a hand to emphasise her words. "Did you not hear that I left Honourable Owen to deal with this priest?"

"Owen is half-drunk, and this is serious," replied Neil bluntly.

"I forbid you to go. D'ye hear me, man?" cried Francesca, with all the intensity of her nature pulsating in her rich voice.

"If Miss Rintoul is in any danger, Owen is not the man to deal with the matter," said Neil quietly but with determination. "You must excuse me, I mean to hear the minister for myself."

He did not wait for further protest, but, turning on his heel, strode down the hall.

"What is this about Miss Rintoul?" he demanded, pushing Bubbly aside unceremoni-

ously, and unchaining the door.

"I came to find out what you or your mistress have done with her. We have not seen her since morning," said Murdoch.

"Do you give me your word as a gentleman that this is not a mere ruse to get inside the house?" asked Neil cautiously.

"On my word, sir, it is not. Miss Rintoul is gone, and I want——"

"I can assure you she is not here, nor have we had any hand in her disappearance," declared Neil earnestly. "Indeed, if I can help you in any way to find her——"

"Stand aside, traitor!"

Francesca thrust him aside and stood with blazing eyes in the doorway.

"Awa' wi' ye, man," she declaimed, looking with hatred upon Murdoch. "We care nothing for my wretched cousin, and we would not help you to find her if she were dying. Go!"

"I have your word, Major McNeil?" said Murdoch, ignoring the lady's outburst.

"Yes," said Neil. "But don't go. I must hear more of this."

He pushed past Francesca, and, taking the minister's arm, led him down the steps, questioning him eagerly. Francesca stood in the doorway, a black rage upon her face.

Murdoch told all he knew of Jean's disappearance — which was nothing.

"If this mad crowd of yours

are not responsible, the only other person who would have an interest in her disappearance would be her uncle, Rufus Rintoul."

McNeil smiled grimly.

"You may take it from me that he had nothing to do with it. I cannot tell you where he is, but I can assure you he is not in a position to kidnap his niece—nor anybody else."

"To search for her without a clue is hopeless," said Murdoch, his brows drawn in perplexity.

"Can we not go round her favourite haunts? I saw her once in Dorning Castle. She might have gone there and twisted her ankle amongst the ruins. We must do something. A word to Signorina Marinetti and I'm with you."

He turned back to the door, where Francesca still stood, eyeing him gloomily.

"Signorina, I'm going to help Mr Murdoch search for your cousin," he said, ignoring her expression.

"You ken what I think—you are a traitor," replied his mistress with bitter contempt.

"Nonsense, Signorina. I have got you into the house, and I mean to keep you here. But that's no reason why I should stand aside while this poor girl is in difficulty—perhaps in serious danger."

Francesca laughed bitterly.

"Do you think I have no eyes?" she demanded, scorn in her voice. "Do you think

I have not seen that you love her? *Eccolo!*"

The blood sang hotly in Neil's head, and his tongue was impotent to deny. He stood for a moment irresolute, and then, despairing of a reply, hurried off to join the waiting minister.

It was late when he returned, tired and disappointed. They had called at the manse, and cross-examined Mrs Murdoch as to Jean's favourite habits and haunts, but had learnt little. Then, desperately, they had tramped the surroundings of Dorning, and drawn blank.

Neil had grave doubts as to whether or not he would be admitted to Dorning House on his return, and it was something of a relief to him when the door opened readily to his knock.

"Is't you, Major McNeil?"

Old Ronald Aitken, candle in hand, peered round the door. Evidently Francesca had issued no orders against Neil's admission.

"Did ye hear aucht o' Miss Jean?" whispered the old man, the lines on his withered face worn deeper with anxiety.

"Not a word—not a trace," replied Neil dejectedly.

"Puir lassie! I doot she maun ha'e had a fa', an' mebbe twisted her ankle or broke her leg. It's an awfu' buzinness."

"You knew Miss Rintoul well? You speak as though you had a fondness for her, Mr Aitken."

"She wus the apple o' ma

e'e, the wee lass," replied old Ronald earnestly. "I wud gi'e a limb tae help the bairn."

"Ay, and so would I, Mr Aitken, willingly," responded Neil. "But what can we do? It is useless to search further in the dark, when we have no idea what has become of her. I have arranged to see Mr Murdoch in the morning, as soon as I get back from the island."

Ronald sighed deeply, and led the way with his candle to the smoking-room.

"Ye'll ha'e a nicht-cap afore ye gang tae bed, Major McNeil?" he asked. "A wee drap o' hot toddy wud dae ye nae hairm, an' the kettle's on the bile on the hob in ma room."

"A good idea, Mr Aitken," agreed Neil. "May I come to your room and drink it?"

He had had little opportunity of making the old butler's closer acquaintance. Indeed, Ronald had fulfilled his duties in a manner that had not invited conversation. It was only because of Neil's obvious anxiety for his favourite that he now made friendly overtures.

"Come awa' ben."

He led the way to the butler's pantry, and busied himself in the preparation of the toddy.

"I suppose you have no recollection of ever having seen me before, Mr Aitken?" asked Neil, as he accepted the steaming glass from the old man's hand.

"I'm auld, laddie, but ma e'en are gye sharp yet," replied the butler, with a shrewd smile.

"I kent ye as sune as I set ma e'en on ye. Fine I mind when yer gran'faither kept the Rintoul Arms, though ye were juist a wee lad in short breeks. I often wunner whut garred ye mix yersel' up wi' this daft crew."

Neil shrugged his shoulders.

"Daft crew is right," he said bitterly. "But needs must, you know, Mr Aitken, and I had no idea, when I committed myself, that I was to serve against Miss Rintoul. But what about you? You are serving us here now without a protest."

"I ha'e nae option. I'm but cairryin' oot the deid Laird's wull, though, Guid kens, it's sair again' ma ain. But I mauna let ma tongue run on about that. Ma instructions are tae act fair an' unbiassed, an' clashin' wi' yin o' the interested pairties'll no' dae. It'll no' dae at a'."

The old man's nose and chin snapped together, and the long thin line of his mouth spoke eloquently of his determination to gossip no further.

Neil, seeing that it was impossible to loosen his tongue, hastily swallowed what was left of the scalding drink, bade his host good night, and retired.

He could not sleep for thought of Jean. His mind dwelt upon the most direful possibilities, conjuring up scenes in which Jean lay crippled and hungry in the chill night air in some spot far from human aid. That she might be absent of her free will did not occur to him, or if it did,

he dismissed the idea as absurd. There was nothing, so far as her friends knew, that could tempt her to leave the district, and had she wished to do so, there was no reason why she should go surreptitiously.

He rose early, unrefreshed and anxious, and breakfasted before any other of the party was afoot, Ronald Aitken waiting on him in silence. It was only when he rose to make his daily trip to the island that the old man spoke.

"Ye'll let me ken if ye hear aught o' her?" he asked anxiously.

"Certainly I will, Mr Aitken," replied Neil.

"I wud hunt for her masel', but I daurna leave ma trust," added Ronald with a sigh. "I maun aye be here tae see that the rules are [stickit tae."

"I understand. But you may rest assured that everything possible will be done. Mr Murdoch will be out by now, and he couldn't have a better man to help him than Rab Wilson."

As Neil rowed across to Meath, he looked over his shoulder several times to make sure that Rufus would show

himself, according to custom and arrangement, outside the hut. He had too great a respect for his prisoner to land until he had taken this precaution. Rufus made no secret, in their daily exchange of courtesies, of his intention to escape, and Neil never felt at ease until he had discharged his cargo and was safely afloat again. Then he would rest upon his oars and watch, while Rufus came down to the beach to collect his day's rations.

On this morning, however, the foreground of the hut was deserted, and McNeil was puzzled until he remembered that he was several hours ahead of time. Rufus would not be expecting him, and was probably still asleep.

He rowed along the rocky shore until he was opposite the hut, and then, steering as close to the rocks as he dared, he shouted and whistled shrilly to arouse his prisoner. At first his signals were without result, but in the end the door of the hut opened and a figure stepped out.

To Neil's amazement, however, it was not Rufus Rintoul that appeared before him, but Jean.

CHAPTER XXI.

Jean's presence upon the island of Meath requires some explanation.

After the failure of the attempt that the minister and Rab Wilson had made on her

behalf, she was at a loose end. She had no real hope of success in the contest, and, indeed, troubled her brain practically not at all with plans for the capture of Dornig House. She

spent much of her time out of doors with a book.

Young Bill being a fellow who insisted upon his rights in the most unmistakable fashion, Mrs Murdoch had little time to allot to the entertainment of her guest, and Jean was therefore thrown mainly upon her own resources.

Often she was to be found in her favourite corner of Dorning Castle, sunning herself in the shelter of the crumbling walls. At other times she would ramble for miles through the somewhat monotonous countryside, or wander along the coast on the wide stretch of sand that separated solid land from sea.

Often she curled up in a sheltered hollow among the bents that lined the beach, and spent hours over a favourite book.

On the morning of the day on which Murdoch paid his visit to Dorning House she went off by herself as usual, having made a strenuous but unsuccessful attempt to carry Mrs Murdoch with her.

"Nothing doing, my dear," said that virtuous matron. "The claims of maternity win by about a dozen lengths, if a minister's wife may use a metaphor from the shameful sport of horse-racing. Anyhow, you can take it from me that Young Bill needs me more than you do. Now, don't grumble. Blame Old Bill if you like. He's the man who objects to bottles, not me."

The previous day Jean had

lain amongst the bents, and had noticed, without much interest, a boat put out from the estuary of the Loun, and cross to the little isle of Meath. She had thought she recognised in the figure at the oars Major McNeil, but had not been certain.

This day she turned her steps in the same direction, and finally settled down amongst the warm dry sand in a nook into which the somewhat chill wind did not penetrate.

She had not been there long when again she saw the boat put out from the Loun, and this time she was certain that it was McNeil who rowed. She knew Meath from her childhood, and could think of nothing upon its rocky shores of sufficient interest to attract him to more than one visit.

At first she determined to tell Mr Murdoch upon her return to the manse, and see if he could offer an explanation; but when she had seen McNeil row back and watched him tie the boat to the landing-stage in the estuary of the Loun, it occurred to her that she might easily investigate for herself. Should there be any connection between McNeil's visits to the island and the Dorning inheritance, it would be a great feather in her cap should she discover it and carry the news to Rab and the minister.

As she lay amongst the dry bents with her book she was safe from McNeil's observation. Having secured the boat,

he walked off towards Dorning House without a suspicion that he was watched. Jean gave him ample time to get clear away before she rose from her unintentional hiding-place. Fortunately she was on the same bank of the river as the landing-stage, and in a few moments she had slipped the painter and was afloat. The same cluster of trees which had hidden Dorning House from McNeil during the alarm of fire now concealed Jean's piratical expedition from the windows of the house. She rowed gracefully, and, notwithstanding the strength of the current, soon reached the island, where she beached the boat, and leapt lightly upon the shingle.

Her steps led her naturally towards the old fishing-hut, with which she was acquainted from her childhood. She paused upon the little patch of green before the hut, and looked around her with wrinkled brows. There were signs that some one had been on the spot not long before. A frying-pan, containing rashers of bacon and two partially cooked eggs, from which the fumes still rose, was an indication that could not be lightly dismissed. A light steam hovered over an open fireplace constructed of boulders, and the witness of the stones around hinted that the fire had been hastily doused with water.

"Is any one at home?" called Jean, and awaited an answer.

None came, so she repeated her question. As it remained unanswered, she crossed to the half-open door of the hut, and knocked.

There was still no response, so she pushed the door open and entered. The hut was empty, but for a pair of neatly-folded blankets and a pile of books.

"Now I wonder what can be their object in keeping the island occupied?" said Jean aloud, looking round thoughtfully upon these signs of habitation.

"It's perfectly simple when you know the reason. If you'll come outside I'll explain it to you, niece."

The voice brought Jean's heart to her mouth, and she turned with startled face to find her uncle smiling broadly at her from the patch of level ground before the hut. He had approached silently over the grass during her preoccupation.

"Uncle Rufus!" she exclaimed.

"The very man," he replied, in the dry manner that he cultivated. "Your perspicuity does you infinite credit. You hardly look as pleased to see me as I'm perfectly willing to admit that I am to see you."

"But—I don't understand," said Jean. "How are you here in league with my cousin? I've seen Major McNeil come to see you——"

"Sit down, lass, and I'll endeavour to make the matter clear. You'll find that boulder

on the left as soft as any of them. I've tried them all. It's been one of the few occupations possible for an active man."

Jean obeyed, and Rufus Rintoul stood in front of her, his tall figure towering above her.

"I suppose it was just curiosity, the curse of woman-kind, that brought you here," he went on. "Well, it's a weakness for which you'll have to pay the penalty—but we needn't go into that yet awhile. We'll have our bit crack amiably first.

"I'm not in league with that wild woman—God forbid! I'm just a poor fool who has allowed himself to be got the better of—not by her, thank God!—but by this same McNeil that I estimated too low in the intellectual scale. To a certain extent I deserve my punishment, just as you deserve yours for the vice of curiosity."

"Then you are a prisoner on the island?" said Jean, looking up at him with some amusement.

"Excellently taken, niece. They marooned me here, as a compliment to my sagacity. So long as I was at large, they could not get a wink o' sleep o' nights for fear of what I might be up to. I don't think they lose many hours' rest over you and your interfering parson, but they were taking no chances on me."

"Now I understand why you are pleased to see me," declared Jean. "You wish me to help you to escape."

"I should put it somewhat differently," said Rufus, his smile turning grim upon the words. "Put it that your opportune arrival with a boat affords me the chance I need."

"It's the same thing, except that you give me no credit for my help," protested Jean.

"Help! I need no help. My portmanteau is already aboard the boat, and I have only to bid you a tender—but strictly avuncular—farewell, and I'm off."

Jean's face changed as she realised his meaning.

"But—but you would not leave me here alone?" she stammered.

"Why not? Your charming cousin has not hesitated to leave *me* here alone. We are rivals in the chase, and if it suits her book to keep me out of the way, it suits mine to keep you. I made one mistake by under-estimating an opponent, and I'd be a fool to make a second."

"But, Uncle Rufus, you can't keep me here. Major McNeil will release me when he comes to you to-morrow."

"Aha, lass! So you count on him, do you? You have a friend in the enemy's camp! You're cuter than I took you to be. Well, even if he's fool enough to set you free to-morrow, a day's a day. It's twenty-four hours that I have before your cousin will know that I'm again a factor in the case."

Jean was not exactly terrified at the idea of a night alone on

the island, but the prospect was certainly not agreeable. She made another appeal for mercy.

"If that is all, uncle—if it is only a matter of keeping your escape secret until they discover for themselves—I'll give you my word——"

"A woman's word," Rufus interrupted cynically, "is music to a man's ear, and frequently damnation to his prospects. I'll take no chances, so you must just resign yourself to what I've had to put up with myself. I'll leave ye the blankets, and ye'll find a good wholesome meal half-cooked in the frying-pan. I had to put the fire out when I saw you coming, so as not to arouse your suspicions. I did a bit of lightning packing, and I was hiding behind a rock close by you when you landed. At first I meant to take the boat and clear out without a word, but blood is thicker than water, and I couldn't bear to leave you without passing the time o' day."

Rufus Rintoul's banter was so obviously pleasing to himself that, notwithstanding the circumstances, its victim frequently could not avoid entering into the spirit of it. Even now, with the prospect before her of at least one solitary night upon the island, Jean could not forbear a smile.

"You mean that you could not resist the desire to crow over me," she said lightly enough.

"Ay, maybe there's something in that too," Rufus

agreed, with a twinkle in his green eyes. "You've got the Rintoul gift yourself, niece, of having a sly dig at folks. Well, don't let us prolong the agony of parting. I need hardly advise you to keep out of bad company—and that reminds me, I'm none so sure that old Sam Pepys and Benvenuto are fit associates for a young lass like you. You'd better put them out o' the hut before you settle down for the night."

Jean had a desperate impulse to make a wild dash for the boat, but she realised almost at once the hopelessness of the attempt. Even with the advantage that the surprise would give her, she could not hope to outdistance the long muscular legs of her uncle, and, anyhow, he would be bound to overtake her before she could push the boat back into the water.

She sighed, and resigned herself to her fate.

Rufus looked down at her for a moment longer, with a curious expression in his green eyes, that might have been—pity—or even compunction. Then, with a toss of his fiery masterful head, he turned sharply on his heel, and with a harsh "Good day, niece," made off towards the beach.

He had no difficulty in crossing the narrow strait, nor was his escape observed by any of the occupants of Dorning House. Having tied up the boat at what he well knew to be its accustomed place, he made off

hastily, and, for the moment, disappeared into the unknown.

Jean, left alone upon Meath, remained seated as her uncle had left her, her firm little chin resting upon her cupped hand, her elbow on her knee, surely the most dainty Crusoe that ever a desert isle could boast.

At last, with a long exhalation, she brought her mind back to its immediate surroundings, and, starting to her feet, looked around her.

"Bless me!" she exclaimed. "I believe I'm famished."

She found a little heap of driftwood that her uncle had collected, and quickly had the fire alight, and the congealed bacon sizzling comfortably over the blaze. After all, the conditions of her isolation were

none so desperate. The weather was mild, she had food and blankets, and the sure hope that on the morrow Neil McNeil would come—to her rescue. (Of that she never doubted.)

There would be perturbation at the manse, of course, but Jean knew her friend Clarice too well to fear that she would worry to excess. So long as Little Bill was hearty and in good voice, his mother would take no permanent harm from the disappearance of a mere friend.

So it was that Jean turned in that night—alongside of the inquiring Samuel and the swash-buckling Benvenuto—with a better grace and less trepidation than one might have anticipated.

CHAPTER XXII.

She awoke, conscious of a confused mixture of whistling and shouting, and as her mind cleared, realised that this must be her uncle's jailer come upon his daily visit.

There was no mirror in the hut!

Her hands flew to her plaited hair, and dressed it as best they could in their blindfold fashion. She smoothed her crumpled frock, put on her shoes, and glanced down in distaste at her untidiness. Then, with a little toss of her pretty head, that said as plainly as words, "Why should I worry about appearances because of a man in

whom I take not the slightest interest?" she opened the door.

Neil's impression of her as she appeared in the doorway is a striking example of the dictum that facts are not absolute, but merely relative to point of view. He thought her charmingly fresh and immaculately toileted, but he marvelled none the less at her appearance on the island. Where, then, was Rufus Rintoul?

Neil could not interrogate Jean from his present distance, so he shouted to her to meet him at his usual landing-place, towards which he rowed. When he was close to the beach he

awaited her arrival—being a cautious man.

“Good morning, Miss Rintoul,” he called, as the girl drew near the water’s edge. “What are you doing here, and where is your uncle?”

Jean smiled ruefully.

“My uncle is gone and has left me as a substitute,” she said.

“Gone from the island?” cried Neil excitedly.

“He escaped in my boat—or, rather, yours, for I borrowed it yesterday to find out why you came to the island. I have found out, you see!”

No sooner had Jean informed him that Rufus was gone from the island than Neil grounded the boat upon the beach and leapt ashore.

“Good God!” he exclaimed. “And you have been here alone throughout the night, while we have been hunting high and low for you!”

“You have been hunting for me!”

A faint flush rose on Jean’s cheeks as she spoke, and the expression upon her face encouraged Neil to words that he dared not otherwise have spoken.

“Could I do otherwise when I knew that you were lost? How could I rest—how could I—but surely you understand, Miss Rintoul?”

The tone of Neil’s voice was a warning to Jean. She was not prepared for the intimacy of it. A tremor ran through her frame, and then she stiffened—visibly.

“I don’t understand,” she said coldly. “Indeed, it is quite incomprehensible to me. You are my cousin’s servant, I believe, and—and why you should worry because a rival claimant has disappeared is—well, it seems to me to be absurd.”

Neil was taken aback at this view of the circumstances. He had to admit to himself that his position was untenable. He was Francesca’s right-hand man. The disappearance of a rival was all in her favour, and yet here was he, gloating over the discovery of that very rival. Nevertheless, though he realised that his position was illogical, his delight at the recovery of Jean did not diminish in the least.

“Absurd or not,” he said boldly, “I was out with Mr Murdoch until late last night searching for you.”

“Does my cousin approve of your latest activity?” asked Jean, her delicate colouring flushed to a deeper tint. “I should hardly expect her to, if I may judge by the little I have seen of her.”

“Surely you don’t think that I would take such a step and leave her in ignorance,” replied Neil, with a certain diplomacy which, however, did not succeed in its object.

“I see,” said Jean with a shrewd smile. “She *knows*, but you don’t say that she approves.”

Unable to deny the truth of this conclusion, Neil adopted the ancient and clumsy ex-

pendent of changing the subject.

"Your uncle—Mr Rintoul—why did he leave you here, and how did he manage it?" he asked abruptly.

"Your second question is easily answered. He simply commandeered the boat, and told me to stay. Being a dutiful niece and too fragile to knock him down, I stayed."

"But why should he bother——"

"He *said* it was to ensure a twenty-four hours' start, but I think it was probably merely to indulge his peculiar sense of humour by giving you an unpleasant surprise."

"Humph!" grunted Neil with a scowl that on his scarred face looked doubly vicious. "If I had him here I'd show him what I thought of his humour. To leave a defenceless girl alone all night on——"

Jean interrupted with a tinkle of musical laughter.

"You should be in melodrama, Major McNeil," she said. "'Defenceless girl'—'desert island,'—why, what harm could come to me here? You know, looking at it from the point of view of the outsider, I think Uncle Rufus was quite justified, and to be candid—I rather like him. Of course it's all in the game. But then you have been contaminated with melodrama through association with my cousin."

"Melodrama or not, I think it was a rotten trick," replied Neil dourly.

"Then you are really going to set me free?"

"Of course I am."

"I hope my cousin will be pleased, but I ha'e ma doots, as we say in Dornig. Still, I should be the last person to protest, especially as I am dying to get back to the manse, where there are baths and hair-brushes—also I am famished."

"I'm sorry, Miss Rintoul," said Neil. "I should have thought of that, and not kept you here talking."

As he rowed across to the mainland, Neil caught a curious smile on Jean Rintoul's face as she looked at him. He rested on his oars and smiled in return. There seemed to be little left of the enmity that had apparently existed between these supporters of rival causes.

"Have you got a joke against me, Miss Rintoul?" he asked.

"There is an element of mischief in your expression that suggests that you have done me down somehow."

"A joke?—I don't know that you would call it that," replied Jean, a shade of thoughtfulness crossing her face. "It's only—well, I think I ought to tell you, as you have treated me so decently—of late."

Her colour rose prettily on the last words, and Neil knew that she was thinking of the time when she had struggled in his arms. She had forgiven him that, then!

"It's only—that I didn't play fairly with you once," she went on, smiling at him quizzically. "I *did* remember,

when you asked me—I mean, about the day when we shouted down the well and you fell in. I knew you as soon as I saw you.”

“Why should you have troubled to deny it?” asked Neil, looking at her earnestly.

In his absorption he forgot to row, and sat, his arms upon the oars, leaning forward, his eyes intent on the pretty smiling face so close to him.

Jean hesitated for a moment.

“Do you remember what I said to you when we parted?” she asked, a certain shyness in her manner. “I won’t ever speak to you again, even if I see you—and I hope I never do! When I saw you again—a man—I remembered—and I thought——”

She paused in embarrassment, sorry that she had spoken.

“You thought?” Neil prompted, almost in a whisper.

Confused, Jean struggled for a way of escape from the cul-de-sac into which she had blundered, but finding no means of retreat, with a woman’s irrelevance, burrowed underground.

“Have you forgotten that I have had no breakfast?” she demanded with sudden inspiration.

Neil’s muscles started into play, and the little boat darted again landward.

“I’d be a brute to keep you now, but I want to have this out with you,” said Neil as he rowed. “May I call at the manse?”

“I won’t be cross-examined,” replied Jean. “Anyhow, you

can’t possibly call on a rival to your employer. We are at daggers drawn—metaphorically so far as I am concerned, but very practically in the case of my cousin Francesca. I don’t carry a stiletto in my—I mean, I don’t carry a stiletto—anywhere.”

“Look here, Miss Rintoul—I may call, may I not?” insisted Neil, determined not to be drawn from his point. “As the companion of your childhood——”

“We met once—you know with what result. We squabbled then, and now that we have met again we continue to squabble.”

“I like it,” said Neil. “And as you haven’t refused, I shall call.”

Jean was silent, her eyes fixed shoreward. Gradually her expression changed to one of dismay.

“I’m afraid we are in for trouble,” she said, turning again to Neil. “My cousin is at the landing-stage.”

Neil glanced across his shoulder, and saw Francesca, accompanied by Bubbly, awaiting his arrival. He was already close enough to the shore to be conscious of the thunderiness of the aura in which she was enveloped. Jean was right—there was trouble ahead.

Neil shrugged his shoulders and pulled in. As the gunwale of the boat grated along the staging he leapt out and offered his hand to Jean, and helped her ashore.

“I have bad news, Sig-

norina," he said. "Your uncle has escaped from the island."

"Ah! You have worse news than that, if you will but tell the truth—that Major McNeil has turned villain, and is gallivanting about with my enemy."

"Nonsense, Signorina," said Neil, determined if possible to avoid a scene. "I found Miss Rintoul on the island, where she landed yesterday. Your uncle stole her boat and escaped, leaving her helpless. I have only brought her across, as common courtesy demanded."

"Does common courtesy demand that you should set free my enemy? Is it not plain that while she was there she could not harm me? If it was well to keep my uncle a prisoner, would it not have been well to keep her when chance gave her into your hands? Fine ye ken that it would, but I know you. Once I have told you the truth, and now I tell it to you again. You are a traitor to me, because you love her—this pale skinny chit."

Pale was about the last adjective applicable to Jean as the meaning of her cousin's words reached her mind. In her embarrassment she turned and stared unseeingly out into the Firth.

Neil opened his mouth to protest against this rending of the clothing of his private feelings, and even Bubbly laid a diffident hand upon the arm of his mistress. She shook it off angrily and turned upon

Neil before the first word of protest had passed his lips.

"You dare not deny it," she exclaimed, her rich voice vibrating with the passion that possessed her. "The words would stick in your lying throat. Yet will I give you the chance to prove that you are true to my cause. You are strong—seize her and put her back where you found her."

She stood, a graceful arm outstretched towards her embarrassed cousin, and awaited the effect of her words.

Neil shook his head. His anger was rising fast at this unwarrantable exposure of his emotions, and it was with difficulty that he controlled himself.

"What you ask is not reasonable, Signorina," he said with what composure he could muster. "It would not be right to maroon a solitary girl on an island for weeks. I give you my word that in no way have I been untrue to you. All my actions prove it, and I am still willing to do everything in reason to support your cause. Let us leave Miss Rintoul to go home, and get back to Dorning House quickly. It is not wise of you to go so far from it now that your Uncle Rufus is at large."

Francesca waved her arm in a gesture of contempt.

"Eccolo!" she exclaimed bitterly. "You see?"

She turned to Bubbly, whose mind was in a whirl of uncertainty. He was always carried away by the strength of her

passions, as a piece of wreckage is swept along by the force of a breaker, yet he was not without some lingering compunction, when he happened to be strictly sober, as he was now, as to his responsibility for the downfall of McNeil.

He opened his mouth to make a mild protest, but as he looked upon the beautiful passionate face of his mistress he quailed before her stronger will, and closed it again, lost in the force of her personality.

Francesca turned again upon Neil.

"This is the end," she said fiercely. "I want no man about me whose heart I cannot trust, and who will not even do my bidding. I discharge you, Major McNeil, and Honourable Owen shall have your place. He, at least, is true to me. As for you—what do I care if you go over to my enemy? Guid kens what chance she has against me and my seven brave supporters. Go to the house and I will pay you off. I would not be in your debt."

She turned dramatically to go, but Jean Rintoul stepped into her path.

"Cousin Francesca," she said desperately, her pretty face flushed and her expression eager though embarrassed, "you are making a great mistake. Major McNeil has told you the truth. I should be—sorry if he lost his position through a mere act of politeness to me. I know nothing of him beyond that he brought me over from

the island. Before that we had hardly spoken."

Francesca listened with a contemptuous smile.

"No doubt it suits you well to have a lover in the enemy's camp," she answered cuttingly. "Tut, girl; do you take me for a fool? You lie as badly as Major McNeil does, yet the truth is written on your face like print. It is not only that he loves you, but for all that you say you have hardly spoken to him—you love him in return. That is why you plead for him."

She pushed Jean aside and strode gracefully inland, with Bubbly at her heels.

Jean and Neil were left together by the water's edge, with eyes that would not meet.

"I am sorry that this has happened," began Neil hesitatingly. "I was helpless to stop her. Your cousin often says things that she should not say. She is——"

"My cousin is a mad woman," interrupted Jean coldly. "I am sure that she suffers from hallucinations, and, of course, I take no notice of what she says. I am only sorry that one of her delusions should have cost you what is, no doubt, a very good position. But perhaps you will find her in her senses again when you get back to the house."

As she spoke she kept her shoulder to Neil and looked out over the water. He longed to see her face.

"She is passionate and very excitable," he said, "but also

wonderfully shrewd, Miss Rintoul. She often seems to be able to fathom people's motives and—feelings, by intuition. I am not so sure——”

Jean turned upon him suddenly with flaming face, and a passion in her eyes that for the first time witnessed to the identity of the blood that flowed through her and her cousin's veins.

“I tell you she is a mad

woman,” she cried, her eyes blazing into his. “And she is a fool. I have dismissed the very thought of her words from my mind. For what you have done for me this morning I thank you—I do not wish ever to see you again—if I do I shall not speak to you.”

She turned upon her heel and ran from him, making, by way of the beach, in the direction of the manse.

CHAPTER XXIII.

An hour or two later Mr Morrison of the Rintoul Arms, who was bottling spirits in the cellar, was called upstairs to interview a prospective boarder.

“A room by the week? Oo^{ay}; ye can ha’e number five wi’ the box bed. Ye’ll ha’e the hoose tae yersel’, an’ if ye tak’ guid days wi’ bad, ye’ll no’ fare sae ill. But I thocht ye were thrang wi’ the folk at the Big Hoose, frae a’ I’ve heard?”

Mr Morrison, casting his fly for information, awaited a rise. He possessed, by nature, an innocent interrogative expression, that was almost irresistible. There was nothing impertinent in his inquiries. His curiosity was so open and natural that one usually satisfied it automatically, so that it hurt Neil to fence with him.

“Ah, well, you know yourself, Mr Morrison, that the ownership of the Big Hoose is in the hands of the gods at present,” he said lightly.

“All of us who are mixed up in that affair are liable to sudden changes.”

“Oo ay, ye’re richt there, Major McNeil, but there’s nae change in the proprietorship the noo, I tak’ it?”

“No, no, there’s no change. The Signorina Francesca Marinetti is still in possession.”

“D’ye tell me that, an’ you takin’ a room at the Rintoul Arms? Man, I’m astonished.”

“Ah, well, it’s a complicated business this, Mr Morrison. There are wheels within wheels. You understand.”

“Oo, of course,” agreed Mr Morrison, who did not understand in the least. “Ye’ll ha’e yer plans; but, man, it’s an unco furrin name for a Rintoul is that Sign—the name ye gi’ed her. Mistress Jean Rintoul wud dae fine fur the ignorant folks o’ Dorning.”

“I dare say,” replied Neil non-committally. “What did you say was the number of my room?”

"Number five. I'll tak' ye up," replied Mr Morrison, hopeless of further news.

Neil McNeil was thoroughly miserable. Left to himself, he sat upon the edge of the high box bed with its gaudy patchwork quilt, rested his chin in his clenched fists, dug his elbows into his knees and, thus hunched together, dangled his legs restlessly.

He felt that his dismissal from Francesca's service was ignominious. When he considered the services that he had rendered her it seemed grossly unjust, and yet he could not feel altogether satisfied with himself. If only he had never met Jean! Francesca had some ground for her action, he admitted freely. Had it been any other than Jean whom he had found upon the island, would he have set her free? He could not satisfy himself as to his own disinterestedness, and therefore could not throw upon his late mistress the whole of the blame for the rupture.

He had not seen her when he returned to Dorning House for his kit. A very shamefaced and uncomfortable Bubbly had been deputed to make a settlement with him. All Neil's instincts cried out against the acceptance of the money that he had undoubtedly well earned, yet he was not in a position to refuse. He had taken on the job because he was hard up, and he would have been a fool to stand upon his dignity.

Those of his fellow-hirelings

whom he had seen before he left had been strained and self-conscious in their parting words. In their hearts they knew that his services entitled him to better treatment, but their infatuation would not let them admit that their queen could do any wrong, and therefore, like many good men before them, they smothered their better feelings for a woman's caprice.

His downfall and the slights that had been put upon him, however, would not in themselves have been sufficient to reduce Neil to his present state of misery. It was Jean—Jean all the time—that was in the forefront of his mind. Francesca had diagnosed his case well. He was madly in love with the girl, and at last he admitted it to himself freely. Had Francesca been equally accurate in her thrust at Jean, Neil would have snapped his fingers at his dismissal, and, indeed, at the whole world.

The girl's parting words were stamped upon his mind as with a searing-iron, and the scar, he thought, was unhealable.

Why, then, had he taken a room at the Rintoul Arms by the week? Cast off by Francesca and scorned by Jean, surely his best course would have been to shake the dust of Dorning from his shoes for ever. That, however, he could not bring himself to do. He had been too closely connected with the drama that was in progress to cut himself off from it completely. He was con-

vinced, he knew not why, that it had not yet reached the last act, and he felt that he must stay until the fall of the curtain, if it were only as a spectator.

He had another reason, though he despised himself for even considering it. The last words that Jean had spoken—the words that twisted him with pain as they echoed in his ears—were strangely reminiscent. Surely they were almost a repetition of those she had spoken many years before, and had herself proved false. Wrong once, might she not be wrong again?

It was no more than a straw, but he clutched at it eagerly, and, indeed, it was the real deciding factor in his present course of action. After all, anything might happen in the mad atmosphere of Dorning.

Early in the evening he encountered Rab Wilson in the bar parlour. Rab looked surprised at his presence, and, after the customary greetings, demanded the reason for it.

"Is it yer nicht oot, the nicht, that ye're no' gairdin' yer bonny mistress?"

"Have you heard nothing from Miss Rintoul or your friend the minister?" asked Neil with surprise.

"Tae tell ye the truth," said Rab, hesitating with an embarrassment unusual to him, "I ha'ena seen them for twa-three days. I've been oot o' the toon, an' juist got back this mornin'. I was gaun up tae the manse the nicht."

"Then you haven't heard that Miss Rintoul was lost?"

"Lost! An' is she found again?" cried Rab, starting to his feet excitedly.

"It's all right, Rab," replied Neil reassuringly. "I had the pleasure of finding her myself."

As shortly as he could, he gave Rab an outline of the bare facts, leaving it to Jean to fill in any detail that she might care to give.

"So, you see," he concluded, "my mistress and I differed as to what was to be done with Miss Rintoul, and we have agreed to bring my engagement to an end."

"In ither words, ye got the sack," commented Rab with a shrewd smile. "She's an a'k'ard yin tae differ frae, I'm thinkin'—is that Italian body. But auld Rufus is a fair caution, is he no', Neil? He'd stop at naething, an' ye canna but like the man fur it."

"He certainly plays a lone hand for all that's in it," agreed Neil. "It would be exceedingly interesting to know what he is doing now."

"Lettin' nae grass grow under his feet, I'll warrant," said Rab. "But what aboot yersel', Neil? Noo that ye're off wi' the auld love, wull ye no' ha'e a fling wi' the new? Come ower tae us, an' lend a helpin' hand tae Miss Jean."

Neil looked at his old friend curiously and said nothing.

"I canna offer ye siller," said Rab, making an erroneous guess at his thoughts. "But

nae doot there'll be pickin's if we win oot."

"It's not the money, Rab," said Neil with a bitter smile. "But there are two very good reasons why I can't accept your offer. The first you will discover quickly enough if you ask Miss Rintoul to take me in on her side. The other is that it wouldn't be playing fair. Signorina Marinetti brought me up here at considerable expense to help her. All I know about the affair I learnt in her paid service, and though she hasn't hesitated to call me a traitor, I'm hanged if I'll be one."

"Ye're far ower partieler, I'm thinkin', but maybe ye ken yer ain affairs best. Weel, I maun be off tae the manse. Man, Neil, ye never thocht tae see me an' diveenity hob-nobbin' thegither! It's a rare ploy, I'm tellin' ye."

Several times during the ensuing week these two met and talked, and Neil noticed that Rab did not renew his offer of a post in Jean's service, nor did he give any hint that a further attempt upon Dorning House was being planned. Neil marvelled at the peace that prevailed. Where was Rufus? All the gossip of the bar parlour of an evening did not produce a sign of him from the time he had vanished from Meath. That he was maturing a surprise for Francesca, Neil felt was certain. Yet time was passing, and when Neil had spent a dull week at the Rintoul Arms,

Francesca had fulfilled one-half of the stipulated residence.

Rumours of the doings at the Big Hoose were rife. They were banked with Mr Morrison, and any one could draw upon the common capital at will. Mostly they were but tales of the unconventional behaviour of Francesca and her retinue, varied occasionally by what proved to be canards about fresh attacks on the house. The popular idea of Francesca was that she must be some form of female devil let loose upon the world for its sins, the main ground for this belief being the unusual condition of the minister's face in the pulpit on Sabbath. Some declared it to be sacrilegious of him to appear in the kirk with the marks of the she-devil's claws still upon his cheeks.

The minister's active support of Jean Rintoul had, fortunately, the sympathy of his parishioners. Had it been otherwise, things might have been very unpleasant for him, as it was impossible to keep his part in the affair dark. As it was, Rab Wilson had explained the origin of the scratches to the habitués of the Rintoul Arms, believing that the truth would be better for his fellow-conspirator's character than the legends that might grow out of ignorance. Deduction might even have led in the direction of Mrs Murdoch.

All of this and much more Neil listened to in silence of an evening. It was difficult for

him to avoid adding to the common store of news without appearing churlish, but he told as little as he could, confining himself as far as possible to softening the colours in which his late mistress was painted—an effort in which he was quite unsuccessful.

The evenings passed easily enough in this atmosphere of gossip and rumour, but the days dragged heavily. There was nothing to do except smoke and moon about the village and its surroundings. This latter occupation Neil dreaded, for he lived in the continual expectation of meeting Jean Rintoul, and he hated the thought that she might confirm her last words by cutting him dead. Yet he could not bury himself in the monotony of the Rintoul Arms all day long and retain his sanity.

It was in the little general shop and post-office, where there was no room to dodge, that he met her at last. She turned to leave the counter as he was on the point of entering the tunnel of pots and pans, brushes and onions, that lined the doorway of the emporium. It was dark inside, and Jean had the advantage, in that she recognised him first, and that the dim light concealed the colour that rushed to her cheeks.

For a moment she hesitated, and then came boldly through the pergola of hardware. Neil had to step back into the open to let her pass, and as he did so he recognised her. He stood, his eyes fixed upon her

approaching form, ready, at the slightest sign of recognition, to raise his hat. As she came out her eyes rested on his for a moment, then glanced away without a shade of expression as she passed him.

It was the cut direct. To Neil it was the loss of all he had or ever hoped to have. She had meant it, then! Then, at the moment when his misery was at its climax, he heard her voice. She had come back to him.

"I am sorry, Major McNeil," she was saying, but the blood sang in his ears so that at the moment he could hardly hear the words, "I was very rude. One can carry things too far, and I should not have forgotten that you were very kind to me. Good morning."

She turned to go, having made her apology and cleared her conscience, but something in her words, her tone, and her expression emboldened Neil to make the most of his opportunity.

"That's twice!" he declared to her back.

Jean hesitated in her step, made to go on again, and then her curiosity vanquished her dignity, and she stopped and turned back.

"What's twice?" she asked frigidly.

But Neil would not be congealed. She had spoken to him again, and something of the real reason of her passionate outburst at their last meeting had dawned suddenly upon his mind. Her name had been

coupled with his, her deepest feelings openly canvassed and made the subject of mockery, and he had chosen such a moment to ingratiate himself further with her. No wonder she had turned upon him. That she should have so far forgiven him as to feel any compunction about cutting him, raised him from despair to a quite unjustified ecstasy of hope. Her frigidity could not chill his enthusiasm.

"Twice you have vowed never to speak to me again, and twice you have broken your vow," he answered with a most contagious smile. "Miss Rintoul, it won't do. You'll have to give it up. You dare not say it a third time, for if you went back on it again you would lose the last shred of your reputation as a determined character. Come, let me carry your parcels to the manse."

It was a bold throw, and Neil's genial smile began to show the strain of the effort that lay behind his light words. He gave an audible sigh of relief when Jean's face lit up, and she laughed lightly.

"You are incorrigible, Major McNeil," she said, and offered no resistance as he took the parcels from her arm. "And you know we always squabble."

"I told you before that I like it," replied Neil delightedly.

Yet as they walked across the village green he did not find much to say. There were still barriers of embarrassment

to be broken down, and Neil was too cautious to attempt to storm the citadel a second time. He was more than content with the advantage that he had gained, and hugged exultantly to his bosom two pairs of Findon-haddocks that were fated to figure next morning upon the minister's breakfast-table.

"I hear from Rab Wilson that you really are out of my cousin's service," said Jean, breaking a long silence.

"Yes, I am a gentleman of leisure now," replied Neil, surprised that she should introduce the subject of Francesca.

"And—I wonder if you would act against her now," she said with some hesitation. "Would you be ready to help Uncle Rufus, for instance, if he made you a good offer?"

Neil shook his head. Was she actually sounding him on her own behalf? He could hardly credit it.

"I've thought it out," he said. "It wouldn't be fair. I'm done with the Dorning inheritance."

"I'm glad of that," said Jean. "I thought you would look at it in that light, but I wanted to be sure, though I admit it was an impertinence."

"Why shouldn't you ask? But, by the way, I suppose you realise that your cousin is half-way through her term of qualifying?"

"You are wondering what we are doing. It wouldn't be fair to my two good friends to tell you, even if I were

willing myself. You may be sure, however, that we are watching the time."

"There is your uncle, too. He has been free for a week, and no one has seen a sign of him."

"I think we may take it for granted that *he* is not idle. He's rather a dear, don't you think?"

Neil was saved from giving his opinion of Rufus by their arrival at the manse gate, beyond which Jean would not let him accompany her. He did not dare repeat his request that he might call.

For the remainder of the

day he lived in a kind of dream. His whole outlook was changed, and he caught himself building castles in the air as he had done in the courtyard of Dorning Castle as a boy. Their architecture had altered greatly, however; for whereas in the old days his anxiety had been all for moats and battlements and culverins, he was now mainly concerned with the provision of suitable accommodation for the *château-laine*.

In the night he lay awake, vainly wondering what it was that he had gone to the post-office to buy.

(To be concluded.)

A LETTER FROM INDIA IN 1928.

It was three years ago, on 1st April 1925, that Swaraj was established in India, and the British officials with the British Army finally left the country. Before that the whole of India had been divided up into a multitude of separate independent states. Great chunks of territory had been added to existing native states; elsewhere big landowners had been promoted to be Rajas or Nawabs; in some places sovereignty had been put in commission, and entrusted to small councils of ex-officials of the British Government; while in a few unfortunate tracts democratic Parliaments, elected on a manhood suffrage with elected Presidents, provided Oriental imitations of France and the United States. India was like an experimental farm for testing all varieties of fancy constitutions. The abortive reform scheme of 1920 had given prolific birth to numerous still-born Parliaments; but the travail of 1925 resulted in more new states than even the Peace of Versailles. But I err in calling the Parliaments "still-born": in truth they screamed themselves into fits, which were fatal to them, with no more reason nor coherence than new-born infants. May the new states be less transient, as they are perhaps less strange to

India than those queer Parliaments.

India as a political whole necessarily ceased to exist with the departure of the British Government, which had provided the sole bond of union. The pensions of the departed officials and the interest on British capital invested in India had been secured on the customs; and to ensure payment strong British forces had been left in Karachi, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. British commercial houses still maintained themselves in these port towns; but most Englishmen up-country sold their properties to Indians, and left with the Government. So bitter was the racial antagonism that few of the new states cared to employ Englishmen.

In our own Punjab three states were set up. A Sikh Khalsa democratic state, under an elected President, with its capital at Lahore, included about one-third of the old Punjab. The President was, of course, Sardar J—— of B——, the most violent of the Akalis, a sect which, under the cloak of zeal for purity of religious worship, used violence against their opponents, and displayed the most presumptuous arrogance towards the British. In Rawalpindi a Mahomedan Council ruled over the great Mahomedan tract on the west and north-west

of the old Punjab. Over some eight districts of east and south-east Punjab the Nawab of L—— was made king, and from being one of the pettiest chiefs was exalted to an equality with Maharaja of Patiala. Imperial Delhi is his capital, but great Babylon is fallen. The half-reared walls of new Delhi are crumbling memorials of the ruin of one more Empire of India.

You are already acquainted with the chief events in the three years' lives of these states. We Sikhs of the central state have never been a single community, except for a brief period under the strong rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. We have always been bands of robbers, murderers, and highwaymen. Eighty years of English rule were not long enough to transform a race of marauders into a stable peasantry. Even those of us who had received the veneer of English education remained at heart stupid, violent, and overbearing. Heaven meant us to be soldiers—and I think you will agree that the British Army contained few braver soldiers than the Sikhs,—not statesmen nor scholars. So when England left us to ourselves we simply stripped off the sheep's clothing we had been wearing so uncomfortably. Every big man surrounded himself with a band of young men, well armed, and partially trained and drilled by old officers of the British Army. These local leaders have ever since been

ruling, or rather spoiling, each their own tract of territory, and fighting with all their neighbours. The central government in Lahore cannot enforce its decrees, nor will it be able to do so until a new Lion of the Punjab is born. The Territorial Army, which you English tried to raise before you left the country, has, of course, never existed, for none but a few Hindu students joined it. A national militia demands more self-sacrifice and patriotism than we Indians have yet learned.

The Hindu traders and moneylenders are needed by the Sikhs, and in order to conciliate them the Land Alienation Act has been repealed. So the transfer of land from the small farmers, especially the Mahomedans, to the moneylenders, big and little, is proceeding rapidly. As you know, the Sikhs are themselves first-class usurers, and never needed the protection of this Act to anything like the same extent as the Mahomedans. Co-operative credit societies have almost completely disappeared. In Sikh villages they were mostly one-man shows, even in British times. A big landowner deposited a large sum in his village society, secured good interest on his money without the loss of reputation entailed by individual money-lending, and was sure of a title and honorary magistracy as rewards for his public spirit. These men now need all their money for keeping up their

“armies” of retainers. It is true there is still a Registrar of Co-operative Credit Societies, but he is a wealthy Sikh with a sinecure, and the struggling Mahomedan societies, in which in British times there was real co-operation and much thrift was practised, are to him merely a nuisance.

The Hindu townsfolk have succeeded in getting the prohibition of the export of wheat—their panacea for high prices—made into law. The result has been, as the British Government always said, that the farmers, knowing they will have only a limited market for their produce, have reduced the areas they sow, and prices remain always at what you used to regard as famine rates.

As a result of this and of the general insecurity the value of land has greatly fallen, and—one real benefit—litigation about land has almost ceased. It is hardly worth a moneylender's time to sue for land when the peasant in possession can easily resort to our old Sikh custom of burning down the moneylender's house with his account-books, which are his only proof.

The regular Criminal Courts are usually closed: it is no longer satisfying to put in complaints of assault or petty house trespass against your enemy, or to apply that he should be bound over to keep the peace, when there are much more direct methods available. You can carry off his daughter or burn his stacks or drive a

herd of cattle into his fields at night. All lawyers, except the few Sikhs, have been deported from our state. They would have gone in any case, as in our society head-splitting is better paid than hair-splitting.

The Rawalpindi state has difficulties even greater than ours, but of quite a different sort. It is a buffer state between the rest of India on the one side and the wild border tribes and Afghanistan on the other. The country is wholly Mahomedan, inhabited by tribes who are still knit together in clans and loyal to their chieftains, and is better to fight on than to till. It has now become a great standing camp, but its people cannot alone discharge the duties of the wardens of the marches. Before long they must either accept the suzerainty of Kabul and become a province of the Afghan kingdom, or be annihilated in their efforts to maintain their independence. As beef-eating Mahomedans, they can have no hope of help from a Sikh or Hindu state, such as ours, which is, moreover, jealous of the independence of tribes which once were subject to the Lahore Darbar. The only help we give them is to sell cheap to them our spare cattle, which our religion forbids us to slaughter ourselves.

In this state, where more than anywhere else the peasants had become enslaved to the Hindu moneylenders, the Land Alienation Act has been main-

tained. The Hindus are of little account—even those of Bhera. Why would you English never remember that “*Sánp ka bacha sánp hai*” ?

There are many British officers in the Rawalpindi army. Some are old friends of the Maliks of the Shahpur district, who have shot and played polo with them, and some are men attracted by the free fighting life of our Punjab. As you know, Sir A—— B—— is the commander-in-chief. The English have always felt more sympathy and comradeship with the Punjab Mussulmans than with any other class of Indians. It is just possible that with the great assistance which Englishmen, both soldiers and administrators, are now giving to the Rawalpindi state, it may yet win through.

The Eastern Kingdom is in truth the *Vakil Ráj* which the lawyer agitators of 1917 to 1922 aimed at, and deluded the British Parliament into creating. Neither Sikhs nor Mahomedans would ever submit to be ruled by low-caste Hindu lawyers; and the fact that the reforms of 1921 set up a lawyer oligarchy in the provincial councils and ministries was a fatal defect which doomed those councils to a shorter existence than even the ten years' transition period ordained. Only so long as the British, in their blindness to the real feelings of the Indian gentry and peasants, stood behind these English-speaking lawyers, and by their

support gave them a fictitious importance and appearance of being popular leaders, could they pose as rulers. In most of the kingdoms of India they have now been shoved into the background with their kinsmen the banias; but in Eastern Punjab they have maintained themselves as the advisers and officials of the Nawab. A poor-spirited peasantry, a scarcity of large landowners, the extent to which proselytism by the Arya Samaj sect, in which the lawyers were the leaders, had permeated the people, and the knowledge of the Nawab that he was almost alone in a population alien from him in sympathies and religion, were the causes which gave the lawyers power here. They have used their power to feather their own nests, and to make the Eastern Punjab kingdom safe for oligarchy.

In this state the vote has been given to all who have passed the matriculation examination, and to those only. Thus most of the gentry and peasantry, the old soldiers and the richer traders, have been deprived of all voice in the Government, and hundreds of miserable boys, who have no stake in the country and no qualifications at all except a smattering of English, elect a so-called Parliament. They elect themselves and the lawyers: there are almost as many members of Parliament as electors. Each member draws 1000 rupees a month. They have repealed the Land

Alienation Act, and the peasantry are being rapidly expropriated. The village co-operative banks have, of course, been suppressed, and the moneylenders are prospering. The export of wheat has been forbidden, and the cultivated lands are lapsing into jungle. This is serious in a territory where every few years there is severe scarcity owing to the failure of the monsoon rains. Capital punishment has been abolished. Sentiment has displaced reason. It is sufficient reason for the remission of a sentence of imprisonment on a murderer or a thief that the convict has an aged mother and two minor children to support. All drink-shops have been closed, and prohibition is the law of the state; but there is a rum-still in almost every sugar-cane field. Sugar-cane cultivation has enormously increased; but, strange to say, more sugar is imported than ever before, as the manufacture of spirit is much more profitable than the extraction of sugar.

There is no army in this kingdom. Her territories, however, have always been open to invaders from all sides, and the battlefields of Panipat preserve the memories of inroads and devastation by Persians, Afghans, Moghuls, and Mah-rattas. Here, too, the military adventurers of the eighteenth century carved out their principalities. So it is no new thing for her people to await the coming of the next invader.

Each state took over the railways and canals within its limits. There is now no central administration of either. On the canals regular clearance has been given up, and is left undone, except so far as the farmers of a locality turn out to clear the branch which waters their own lands. Main channels and all distributaries which serve distant localities in another state are left uncleared, and are gradually silting up. Soon the great canal system of the Punjab will be nothing but a network of jungle-covered ramparts, stretching through great tracts inhabited only by wild pig, deer, and jackals. The railways are not in so bad a state, but repairs and renewals are perfunctorily carried out, and accidents are frequent. There is no booking of goods or passengers beyond the border station, and there are no through trains.

As you remember, Indian universities were, even in British times, little more than examining bodies, before which some thousands of boys appeared every year for the matriculation or entrance examination, without any intention of pursuing a college course. Here again sentiment rules, not sense. It has always been regarded as a shame that any poor boy should be ploughed in this examination, which is the key to open the gate of official employment; and now the standard has been lowered enough to ensure that all will

secure this magic key—to office, not to knowledge, as might be thought more proper to a university examination. This keeps every one happy. The Punjab University, the Medical College, and the Veterinary College have not collapsed, but are slowly ceasing to function. The old classes are held, but since the dismissal of the English professors there are few competent men as teachers; in fact, the only men fit to hold professorships, men of real culture and enthusiasm for their subjects, are the professors of mathematics and botany. The others are mere crammers for examinations, which are so easy that cramming is unnecessary. So strong has been the demand that none should be disappointed of his degree, that the standard has been degraded even below the standard of the old Calcutta University, which a commission of yours condemned root and branch in the longest report ever written. It is two years since any one failed to pass a University examination. There is sure to be reaction soon, and England will be begged to send her best men to reorganise our Indian universities.

The Medical College is no longer popular, as it no longer leads to any official career. In British times nearly all graduates of the Medical College were provided with official posts. Only the failures and those who were rusticated for joining in the students' strikes, which

were frequent, took up private practice. Private practice was in the hands of homœopathic quacks and of half-educated *hakims*, who had a smattering of the Yunani or the Ayurvedic system of medicine. Now local bodies either have ceased to employ doctors trained in western medicine, or promise so little fixity of tenure that doctors will not serve under them. So the Medical College is gradually emptying itself. The case of the Veterinary College is similar. The people have gone back to charms, and plasters of cow-dung, as more effective cattle cures than carbolic lotion and Epsom salts.

In the Lahore and Rawalpindi states elementary and secondary education are at a standstill. War, not peace, is the business of their governments and of all their inhabitants, and no one has any time or money to spend on education. In the Delhi kingdom matters are not so bad, as local self-government of a sort still exists there, and the board schools struggle along.

The cry of free and compulsory education was a political cry voiced by those Indians who saw, more clearly than Mr Montagu, that mass education must come before even limited democracy. Mr Montagu, however, swallowed the impossibility, and created a democracy with a minute electorate, which completely failed to represent the real people of India. So having eaten the fruit without

the trouble of sowing the seed, the politicals dropped the cry of compulsory education. Of course, now there is neither the money to pay for it nor teachers to man the schools, nor sufficient policemen to compel a reluctant peasantry to send their boys to school. As in British days, few boys of any class go to school. "National" education, which means history according to the Ramayána, geography according to the Mahabhárata, and the natural science of the Vedas, is almost all that survives. Gandhi's spinning-wheels did not outlive his death in the liquor riots of 192—.

What a great mass movement of outcastes into Christianity there was during the last twenty years of British rule. The sweepers and hide-workers of hundreds of villages were baptised as Christians. In my own small district nearly all the menials had been converted to one sect or another of Christianity, and claimed the status and privileges of Christians. God knows if there was any spiritual awakening in the converts' hearts; we know that conversion certainly meant a social lift and an escape from degrading and filthy work. Where are the converts now? The Arya Samaj sect of Hindus has welcomed them back as Hindus, provided they avoid eating carrion and touching night soil; and so now, as Hindus, they occupy the same social status which they embraced Chris-

tianity to achieve. The absurd college at G——, which taught sweeper youths Hebrew and Greek theology, has closed down.

If you come to think of it, British rule scarcely changed our old customs and morality. Sati was suppressed, and female infanticide became less respectable, though hardly less prevalent; but child marriage, child widowhood, the parda, all the cruel restrictions of caste, our old systems of book-keeping, trade, and usury, all our old superstitions and idolatry, the sanctity of the cow, have survived, and indeed have been made national glories. How rapidly the exotic gifts of Britain to India have disappeared—lawyers, local self-government, the ballot-box, truth speaking as an ideal, corrugated-iron latrines, and municipal midwives: only the paper currency remains. How quickly too have come back the old Oriental practices which the English tried to eradicate—forced labour, nepotism, justice bought and sold, and the great web of official corruption. Some of your people used to write in 1920 that India was rapidly changing and winning a place among the civilised nations of the world: but it was only the superficial observer who said so. In reality a breeze was ruffling the surface of the lake. The depths were unchanged, and the inhabitants of the lake were almost unconscious of the surface movements.

We are back now in the turmoil of the end of the eighteenth century, and have to begin again from there. For more than a century England has with the best intentions been trying, by strictly secular education through a foreign language, by the exaltation of efficiency, simplicity, and single-mindedness—virtues which our souls abhor,—and by a political science which raises democracy into a religion, to force us into a mould which God never meant us to fit, and

to change the pliable, sensuous Oriental into a puritan, matter-of-fact middle-class Englishman. She would have liked to have turned our skins white too. How could we help being hypocrites if we desired our rulers' approbation? With the great desertion of 1925, which again was so well meant, England threw up the sponge, and left for us a hell paved with her good intentions. In this hell we now are, and are blindly groping back to the gate from which to start afresh.

SMYRNA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY A. C. WRATISLAW, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E.

THE Chevalier Laurent d'Arvieux, "Envoy Extraordinary of the King of France to the Porte, and Consul at Aleppo, Algiers, Tripoli, and other ports of the Levant," died in 1702, but the Memoirs in which he described his travels and experiences were not published until 1735, when the Reverend Jean Baptiste Labat, of the Order of Preaching Brothers, gave them to the world in six volumes. The Chevalier, as we learn from his editor's preface, belonged to a noble but impoverished family of Provence which originated in Lombardy, had branches in other parts of France and, according to Père Labat, even in England, where the Italian family name of "Arveo" was transformed into Harvey. In France it passed through the successive metamorphoses of Arveou, Arvieu, Arvieux, and finally d'Arvieux on the family being ennobled, which occurred eleven generations before the author of the Memoirs appeared on the scene.

These Memoirs are particularly interesting, as they relate to a period which is not over-rich in records of the Ottoman Empire. Their author, a keen and extremely curious observer, resided in the course of his long life abroad at Smyrna, in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the Barbary coast, and, though he

does not expressly say so, must have kept careful notes of what he saw and experienced, for no memory, however active, could possibly have supplied the wealth of detail contained in his three thousand pages unless aided by written records. It is impossible to compress within the limits of a single article an adequate summary of journeyings in so many countries and spread over so many years, but the following account of the conditions prevailing in Smyrna—the first part of Turkey which he visited—may be of interest in view of the contest at present raging between Turk and Greek for the possession of that town.

He was born in June 1635, and was thus only fifteen years old when, in August 1650, his father died from the effect of "trois coups de bayonnette" received from the sons of a neighbour with whom he had a difference of opinion regarding a right-of-way through his property. The life of a landed proprietor on a small and barren estate in Provence failed to appeal to the adventurous youth, who saw other scions of noble houses with the permission of the king condescend to a commercial career and return to France with handsome fortunes gained in the dominions of the Grand Signor, and who yearned to follow their

example and restore the fortunes of his family. He had a passion for travel, considerable aptitude for the acquisition of foreign languages, and, what was still more important, two cousins, the Messrs Bertandié, established as merchants in Smyrna. When these relatives consented to initiate him into the mysteries of commerce, he bade farewell to his mother (the editor reveals that she was busily engaged in squandering the little her husband had left his family), and sailed from Marseilles in October 1653 on board the good ship *Postillon*, bound for Smyrna, being then eighteen years of age.

This vessel was a king's ship carrying thirty large and twenty-eight small guns, sixty sailors, thirty soldiers, and eighty officers and passengers, and then employed for the first time on commercial work. It is a striking indication of the state of insecurity prevailing in the Mediterranean that a man-of-war of this force should be required to carry goods safely to a not particularly distant destination, but the event proved that the precaution was by no means excessive. France was at war with Spain and on bad terms with England; but what may be termed legitimate risks to navigation were as nothing to the danger from the Barbary pirates, who swarmed in the Mediterranean and plundered the ships of every nation indiscriminately, to say nothing of the privateers sent out by

the Knights of Malta, and no merchant ship took the sea unless adequately armed or provided with convoy. It was barely a year after the *Postillon* sailed that Cromwell had to send Blake into the Mediterranean with a fleet to chastise the pirates of Tunis and Algiers for their depredations on English commerce.

With a favourable wind they reached Genoa after twenty-four hours' sail. The object in touching at this port was to change into piastres a large sum in pistoles which the vessel carried for trading purposes, as the loss on exchange would have been heavy had the operation been effected in Turkey. In Genoa harbour they found a Dunkirk frigate (Dunkirk then belonged to Spain), which at once made open preparations to attack the *Postillon* as soon as she should leave port, cleaning and manœuvring guns and discharging muskets, greatly to the joy of the Genoese, "the secret and irreconcilable enemies of France," who publicly expressed their hope that the French ship would be taken. These warlike demonstrations so alarmed several of the passengers that they disembarked at Genoa rather than face the redoubtable Dunkirker. Nothing, however, happened in Genoa.

The next port of call was Leghorn, and here things did not pass so quietly. The Dunkirk ship indeed came in after the *Postillon* had dropped anchor, but seeing her ready for

defence, passed by on the other side. Then a Dutch vessel, the *St Pierre*, lying in the roadstead, hoisted her sails and bore down on the *Postillon* to lay her aboard; but the wind fell when she was a pistol-shot away, and the current carried her bows on to the Frenchman, and her bowsprit lodged in the latter's rigging. The French crew, under the impression that the onslaught was due to bad seamanship rather than malice, tried to fend her off; but the Dutchmen opened musketry fire on them, while twenty men leaped on board sword and pistol in hand. Several Frenchmen were killed and wounded in the first surprise, but crew and passengers flew to arms, killed, threw overboard, or made prisoners of the boarding party, and then opened cannon fire on the *St Pierre*, doing serious damage to her hull.

While the combat was at its height, the commandant of the fortress of Leghorn, considering, as well he might, that a free fight between foreign ships enjoying the hospitality of his harbour showed a lack of respect for the Grand Duke his master, opened fire impartially on both combatants. By ill-luck the *Postillon* lay between the Dutchman and the fort, and thus received most of the punishment; but so enraged were her crew that they paid no attention to the strong hint from the shore, and were about to board the *St Pierre* in their turn when the explosion of a barrel of gunpowder set that

vessel on fire, and they were glad to sever her bowsprit and push her off.

The incident had no consequences except that the commandant of the fort locked up the captains of the *St Pierre* and the Dunkirk frigate, and threatened to hang them if any further breach of the peace occurred. It transpired that, though the Dutch Netherlands and France were at peace, Dutch vessels had been authorised to take any French ships with crews exceeding forty men in reprisal for the capture by Toulon privateers of certain Dutch ships. The nine Dutch prisoners were detained on board the *Postillon*, and made to work in place of the Frenchmen who lost their lives.

Repairing the damage received in this action detained the ship for a fortnight at Leghorn. After touching at Malta, she steered for the south of Greece, and the wind failing her near Cape Matapan, was only saved from shipwreck by her boats towing her off that dangerous coast. This incident gave the Chevalier occasion to congratulate himself on not falling into the hands of the inhabitants of the locality, "a race wicked, cruel, perfidious, inhuman, in a word, Greek," who cultivated the unamiable habit of capturing shipwrecked mariners and selling them, if Christians to the Turks, and if Turks to the Christians.

On the 4th of December the ship reached Smyrna, eight weeks out from Marseilles. The

Chevalier was cordially received by his cousins, who gave him a room in their house, with every facility for learning the methods of trade as practised in the Levant.

The population of Smyrna at this time was not quite ninety thousand, less than half what it is now, or at least what it was before the Greek occupation. There were sixty thousand Turks, seven or eight thousand Jews, and the rest Franks (foreigners), Armenians, and Greeks. The present-day claim that Smyrna has always been an essentially Greek town thus appears to rest on no very assured foundation.

For the Greeks our author has not a good word to say. He concedes them a considerable amount of intelligence, but declares that "in duplicity, rascality, and lying they easily outdistance the Jews." Religious prejudice no doubt accounts to some extent for this unfavourable opinion, for he adds that they prefer to remain in shameful slavery under the yoke of the Turks rather than return to the fold of the Latin Church, and help, as they could, the Latin princes to expel these enemies of Christianity.

The Christians, for their numbers, were amply provided with churches. The Greeks possessed a cathedral, with an archbishop, and a church besides; the Armenians two churches and an archbishop; the Catholics three churches, as well as a school kept by

the Jesuits for the education of the young people of their religion. The Memoirs make no mention of a Protestant place of worship, but as an English pastor is spoken of, it is to be supposed that something of the sort existed, probably within the precincts of the English Consulate. The Chevalier pays a high tribute to Turkish toleration. "There is no place in the whole of Turkey," he says, "where Christians have greater freedom in the practice of their religion. The doors of their churches open on to the public thoroughfares; the people assemble, the services are sung, and the congregations disperse without fear. Sometimes Turks enter out of curiosity, and watch what goes on without committing the slightest act of irreverence or causing the least scandal. They are equally indulgent towards the Jews. These people meet in their synagogues and cry and shout like madmen while holding their services, and nothing is ever said to them. It is certain that people in their neighbourhood are much inconvenienced thereby, yet the Turks bear it with patience. The Holy Sacraments are carried to the sick with more pomp and decency than in many towns of Christian Europe, funerals are conducted with solemnity, and it is a thing unknown for the Turks to object or to trouble any one in the exercise of his religion."

When we reflect that no Jew might reside in contemporary

England, that the celebration of the mass was a penal offence, and that it was high treason for a Protestant to turn Roman Catholic; that thirty years later the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the virulent persecution which ensued drove scores of thousands of innocent Protestants out of France; and that over a century was to elapse before the custom of roasting Jews and heretics was abandoned in Spain and Portugal, it is but fair to recognise in the Turks the virtue of religious toleration in advance of the age.

But this did not extend to any one who abjured the Musulman religion. An Armenian who, while quite a lad, had turned Moslem, became conscience-stricken forty years later, and boldly informed the Cadi that he was a Christian, and wished to die in the faith he had abandoned. The magistrate at first thought he must be mad, but finding that the man persisted in his intention, in spite of threats and cajolements, had him thrown into prison, and kept on a diet of bread and water for three days. He was then again brought up, and fresh efforts to induce him to change his mind proving of no avail, he was condemned to death, conducted to the marketplace, and cut in pieces. The Armenian community paid a large sum for the possession of his remains, removed them by night, and buried them with respect as the body of a martyr—as indeed he was. Shortly

afterwards a renegade Greek followed this Armenian's example in reverting to his original faith, and suffered the same fate.

The houses of the Frank merchants, as well as those of the Consuls, were built on the sea-shore with jetties erected by the owners in front, and ships of each nationality moored alongside their Consulate's jetty, where they loaded and discharged their cargo. These jetties were connected by an erection partly of wood and partly of stonework, which served as the fashionable promenade, as does the quay of Smyrna at the present time. The Turkish Government confined its contribution to the commercial prosperity of the port to the levying of custom duties, and in other respects left the foreign traders to work out their own salvation. Goods did not have to pass through the custom-house, though one existed, but were tallied by custom clerks, and the bill for duty sent in subsequently to the merchants concerned. This laxity of procedure naturally led to abuses, and it was not uncommon for goods to be embarked secretly at night, sometimes in the boats belonging to the custom-house, with the connivance of its untrustworthy employees, who received for their complaisance half the amount which would have been paid as duty. When such practices came to light the only result for the merchant was that he was charged double

duty, while the guilty official received a good dose of bastinado on the soles of his feet.

The Turks themselves preferred to build their houses at some distance back from the water and on the slopes of a hill, because they feared an influx of the sea during earthquakes. Such visitations were terribly frequent, and the natives averred that the town had already been destroyed by them six times, and that the seventh would wipe it out so effectually that it would never be built again.

On 20th May 1654 it seemed that this foreboding was likely to be realised. The earth trembled so violently for a quarter of an hour that all thought their last moment was near. The roofs and frames of the houses cracked in an alarming manner, the houses themselves swayed as if they were jostling one another, tiles fell in all directions, and the strongest men could not keep their feet. Catholics took refuge in their churches to implore the help of Heaven and the mercy of God, though, as the Chevalier sagely remarks, these edifices, being built of stone, were much more dangerous shelters than wooden houses.

For a whole month the shocks were incessant, five or six each day, and as many at night. The Franks at first sought asylum on board their ships, whither they removed their commercial books and their most precious possessions; but as time went on familiarity

with the danger bred contempt for it, and they returned to their houses by day and at last slept in them at night, even finding that the rocking motion had a soothing effect when they got used to it.

The Turks and Jews showed less perturbation than the foreigners, the first because their fatalism assured them that nothing they could do would avert their fate when the destined day arrived, and the Jews because they valued their wealth at least as much as their lives, and would not abandon their houses to possible pillage.

The series of shocks ceased suddenly on 1st June, and life resumed its ordinary course.

Another drawback to existence in Smyrna was the plague. Epidemics were frequent, and in the absence of any sanitary control caused fearful ravages. The fatalism of the Turks which gave them courage in an earthquake rendered them particularly susceptible to infection, as they took no precautions whatever. They thought nothing of clothing themselves in garments recently removed from a plague corpse, of using his bedding or sleeping on his mattress in the room where he had just died without the least attempt at disinfection. Is it any wonder that they perished like flies? Foreigners were by no means exempt, but reduced their losses by the use of such measures of precaution as were known to the science of the time. If possible, they retired to the country as soon as the

plague made its appearance, and broke off all communication with the town; or, if obliged to remain, they provisioned their houses for three or four months, and shut themselves up until the epidemic had worn itself out. One precaution in common use among them seems to indicate an unexpected acquaintance with the manner in which plague is communicated. "They kill without mercy all the dogs and cats which try to enter their premises, because these vagabond animals may have been in infected places, and might carry contagious particles in their coats." It would have been better policy had they welcomed the dogs and cats to kill the rats, but the guess was not a bad one.

The representative of the Sultan in Smyrna only held the rank of Cadi or judge, and it was to the comparatively lowly position of this functionary that the place owed much of its commercial prosperity. The importance and the power for good or evil of the local governor seems to have varied with the distance of his district from the capital. Smyrna being in close proximity to Constantinople, where there were foreign ambassadors to pass on the complaints of their countrymen to the Porte, the Cadi dared not venture on more than the recognised amount of exaction; whereas at Aleppo, another great trading centre, the rapacity of the pashas knew no bounds, and resulted in the

caravan trade being largely diverted to Smyrna, to the great advantage of the commerce of that town.

Business was almost entirely in the hands of the Franks—English, French, Dutch, and Venetians. Our countrymen got the lion's share, though, in view of their convivial habits, they can hardly have devoted so much time as they ought to the more serious occupations of life. The Chevalier moralises sadly over the haphazard method of the French, who quarrelled incessantly amongst themselves, while their poverty or their avarice deprived them of the support of the Turkish officials. The superior practice of the English extorts his unwilling admiration. All of them, he says, were splendid in respect of their clothes, houses, furniture, horses, and carriages. Their tables were always abundant and delicate. They gave liberal pay to their dragomans and brokers, and in general to all who did them service. Though they often had private disputes, a question touching the interests of their community united them at once. By levying a duty of 2 per cent on all goods imported or exported by its members, the English company was provided with a fund for the general use, whereas the French worked each for his own hand, and they possessed no common capital.

These were the days when the English Levant Company flourished exceedingly. Created

in 1592 under Queen Elizabeth, its charter was confirmed and extended by James I. in 1605. It had the monopoly of trade with Venice, Turkey, and the Levant Seas, appointed its own Consuls, levied dues, made laws for the government of its members and English subjects in general, and had the power of punishing by fine and imprisonment all who transgressed them or infringed its monopoly. The charter was again confirmed by Charles II. in 1660, but in the eighteenth century the Company fell on evil days and made repeated petitions to the home Government for pecuniary assistance. No less than £110,000 were thus advanced by Parliament between 1768 and 1808, and finally in 1825 it surrendered its charter and the Levant trade was thrown open to all comers.

Foreigners as a rule did not take the trouble to learn the Turkish language, and consequently were obliged to employ brokers in their transactions with the natives. These men were usually Jews or Armenians, and far from honest. On the other hand, the integrity of Turkish merchants receives a high tribute. "By nature they are lovers of justice and uprightness, they keep their word once given, and amongst them there is no need for notaries. For a long while when any dispute arose with foreigners they were content to refer the decision to the Consuls; but having reason to be dissatisfied with the methods of these

functionaries, they now lay their differences before the Cadi, who adjudicates thereon with greater promptitude and equity."

The reputation of the individual Turk for honesty still stands high—higher, indeed, than that of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, though it may have fallen off since the seventeenth century. But it is rather surprising to hear the Turkish police held up as a model. "There is no town in the world where the police is more efficient than in Smyrna. Prices of all articles of daily consumption are fixed by the Cadi, and no weights or measures other than those recognised by law may be used. Any one who sells above the established price or who makes use of unrecognised weights or measures is punished by fine and corporal chastisement." The Naib, or Lieutenant, of the Cadi made weekly rounds on horseback through the bazaars followed by a body of police carrying a supply of sticks and the standard weights and measures. He examined the tradesmen's weights and investigated complaints, and if any one was detected in malpractices, sentenced him to so many blows on the soles of the feet and to a fine of an equal number of piastres. The culprit had besides to bestow liberal tips on the men who held him down, on those who inflicted the blows, and on the one who kept the score. When he got up (if he could stand at all) he kissed

the Naib's hand and received from him a "paternal remonstrance."

In especially bad cases the wrongdoer had his face blackened with charcoal, a straw cap adorned with cock's feathers was put on his head in place of his turban, a large wooden frame weighted with lead and jingling with bells was fixed round his neck, and in this strange guise they led him through the streets jeered at by the riffraff and pelted with mud by small boys. Or, if it were desired to inflict a still more ignominious punishment, they cut off his beard, a deadly insult, blackened his face, hung festoons of stale and stinking entrails from the slaughter-house round his neck, and he made his tour of the town mounted on an ass with his face to the tail, which he was forced to hold in his hands in lieu of reins. In either case a thorough bastinado concluded the programme.

Even these unpleasant results of dishonesty pale before the retribution which overtook an unprincipled baker in Constantinople. The police officer there simply baked him alive in his own oven.

In this connection the Chevalier relates the following occurrence, of which he was an eyewitness.

The son of a grocer of Smyrna, to whom his father had given as good an upbringing as the limited educational resources of the town afforded, rose by his merits to the rank

of Naib to the Cadi. One day when he was going his rounds the neighbours warned his father to hide his false weights (these articles seem to have been an essential item in every tradesman's outfit) lest he should be detected and get into trouble. The old gentleman only smiled, and awaited in his shop the arrival of a son on whose sense of filial duty he could surely count. The Naib, however, had heard of his sire's indiscretions, and riding up to the door said, "My good man, bring out your weights that I may test them." The father laughed at the order, whereat the police entered his shop forthwith, seized the weights, and finding them defective, broke them up. The stern son condemned his father to fifty blows on the soles of his feet and a fine of fifty piastres, and the sentence was executed on the spot to the surprise and grief of the erring grocer. When all was over the Naib dismounted and threw himself at his father's feet, which he kissed with tears, explaining that justice was blind and could draw no distinction between father and son, and that he ought to be pitied rather than blamed for having been forced to do his duty under such painful circumstances.

This Spartan conduct being brought to the notice of the Sultan, the monarch appreciated it so highly that on the office of Cadi falling vacant shortly afterwards the Naib was appointed to it, and sub-

sequently became Grand Mufti of Constantinople.

The recorded examples of disregard of the call of blood in the pursuance of the stern path of duty, from Jephthah downwards, have been at the expense of the younger generation, and it is rather refreshing to hear of youth getting its own back in at least one instance.

The Memoirs discourse at some length concerning the antics of the Consular body. These great men "lived in a fashion full of ceremony and circumspection." They never called on one another, but paid their official visits by deputy. Thus, on a French fête-day, the English Consul would send two of the chief merchants of his colony, accompanied by his Dragomans and Janissaries in their best clothes, to carry his congratulations to his colleague. The Frenchman entertained them lavishly, and numerous toasts were drunk. An hour or two afterwards the Frenchman sent *his* merchants, Dragomans and Janissaries, with the same ceremonial to return the compliment at the English Consulate, where they were similarly entertained, and whence they usually returned intoxicated. On the English feasts the procedure was reversed.

The French Consul, according to the Chevalier, "has always and without dispute taken precedence over all the rest. All yield it to him without hesitation except the English Consul, who always tries

to trespass on his rights. Neither of them ever goes to the customary promenade when he knows that the other is already there; and if by accident both happen to be on the promenade at the same time they take good care not to meet, as otherwise a bloody encounter would certainly result."

One day the Consuls had to pay official calls on the Capitan Pasha, the Turkish Lord High Admiral, who chanced to come into port with his fleet. When the French Consul arrived he found that the Englishman had got in first, and so chagrined was he that he pulled his colleague's chair from under him and gave him a box on the ears. Our author does not relate what followed, but one can hardly imagine the Englishman taking the correction meekly. The Chevalier remarks rather naïvely that the Capitan Pasha was astonished that such action should have been taken in his presence. However, when they explained to him the privileges of the French Consul, he put the blame on the English Consul.

The pretensions of the French Consul were presumably based on an old treaty between France and the Sultan, in which it is stated that "considering that the family of the Emperors of France was in possession of the reins of sovereign authority before the most renowned Kings and Princes amongst Christian nations and has always been a more sincere and constant friend to Turkey than all the other

Kings . . . it is our will that when the Ambassadors of France, residing at our gate of Felicity, come to our Supreme Divan or go to our Vizirs or very honoured Councillors, they shall according to the ancient custom have precedence over the Ambassadors of Spain and the other Kings." As late as 1840 in a Turkish town a French Consul, fresh from Paris, almost came to blows with a colleague in support of his pretensions to precedence. The claim has now died a natural death.

Living was cheap and food good at Smyrna. In the fertile plain to the east of the town game of all sorts abounded—hares, partridges, turtle-doves, ortolans, and francolins; but it was dangerous to go there without a guard, and shooting parties found it prudent to take a Janissary with them to hold the peasantry in awe. Vineyards were numerous and produced abundant grapes, which could be manufactured into wine of first-rate quality, though such was the demand for liquor amongst the thirsty Franks that local supplies were insufficient for their needs, and more grapes had to be imported from Magnesia to fill up the void. Each householder made his own wine at home. Provisions in general were inexpensive. Beef cost but a sou per pound, and veal two sous. A hare could be bought for ten sous, a partridge for five or six, and smaller birds six sous per dozen. The bay provided

excellent fish in great variety, and on the whole Smyrna appeared to the Chevalier a veritable land of Cockaigne.

It was also exceedingly attractive from the social point of view. The foreign merchants of the town seem to have been a most jovial set, and addicted to such frequent merry-makings that the wonder is how they found time to earn the money to pay for them. Sometimes their festivities took place on board ship. On such occasions much gunpowder was burned, as after each toast—and everybody's health was drunk—the ship fired a number of cannon shots "according to the merit and standing of the person toasted." The noise must have been deafening, for other vessels of the same nationality which happened to be in port, and even allies, made it a point of honour to back up each salute with the same number of guns. On the termination of such feasts, it was necessary to rig derricks for the purpose of hoisting the departing guests over the ship's side into their boats, as they were, unless exceptionally gifted toppers, quite incapable of descending the gangways on their feet.

Nor were land celebrations less joyous than those on the water. "When these diversions take place on land in the houses of rich and generous merchants, especially the English, nothing can be added to the magnificence of the banquets or the quantity of wine drunk. After the guests have

broken all the bottles and glasses, they attack the mirrors and the furniture. They smash everything in honour of the person whose health is drunk, and sometimes, when nothing is left to break, they go so far as to light a big fire and cast on it hats, wigs, and clothing to their very shirts, after which these gentlemen are obliged to remain in bed until fresh clothes have been made for them."

Even funerals were made the occasion for a debauch. Mr Spencer Breton, the English Consul, having received the news of the death of his wife in England, was anxious to have the funeral after the custom of his own country, and invited all his compatriots and friends to attend it. On the appointed day the English ships and the foreign ships whose captains had received invitations slowly discharged all their artillery, and hoisted all their flags and black standards. They fired off their guns a second time when the company sat down to table, and again when the repast was ended. The ceremony at the Consulate began with a long complimentary address on the death of the Consul's wife, delivered by a representative of the English community. The Consul, who wore a long mourning cloak, replied modestly. The chaplain then preached the funeral sermon. The company applauded, and afterwards sat down to table to drown in wine the sorrow that this decease caused to them all. The repast

was very long and very splendid. The Consul, in spite of his affliction, ate and drank heartily, as did all the guests until they were in no state to return to their ships, and the Consul had to provide them with beds for the night.

The study of languages and his commercial pursuits were not so engrossing as to occupy all the Chevalier's time, and he found leisure to join in such amusements as the foreign society offered. He played on several instruments, and hints that he was rather sought after. The feud between the French and English Consuls did not extend to their respective colonies, and it was in fact the drawing-room of an English merchant, Mr Joseph Edwards, that he most frequented. This gentleman was rich and hospitable, and often gave dances, followed by splendid collations and concerts, in which the Chevalier shone.

When the writer was in Smyrna thirty years ago, descendants of this merchant prince were still to be found amongst the British community.

Some Greek ladies were invited to these parties, and attended them in spite of the opposition of their husbands. They danced and amused themselves just like the Europeans, but showed (at first) a certain amount of repugnance to being kissed. However, coming to the conclusion that it was up to them to follow the example of the Englishwomen, "who were by no means backward

in according this slight favour," they finally became so reconciled to the practice as to show themselves aggrieved at any sign of its being neglected.

The carnival of 1654 was celebrated with particular éclat. Even the Consuls, though still abstaining from passing one another's thresholds, made no bones about accepting invitations to the houses of individuals, even if their respective Governments happened to be at war, and themselves gave magnificent parties. It was one round of gaieties, and culminated in a series of private theatricals. The French Consul placed his big reception-room at the disposal of the players for the first representation, the 'Nicodeme' of Corneille, where special boxes with lattices in front were provided for the ladies of the country who might not like their faces to be seen in public. The success was prodigious, and in the opinion of connoisseurs the acting would not have been surpassed by professionals. The repast which followed was on so lavish a scale that several Englishmen and Dutchmen were quite overcome, and had to be put to bed to sleep it off.

So much stir was caused by this exploit, and such was the public demand to witness the performance, that it had to be repeated several times. Even the Turks wished to see it, and some of them with rare indulgence allowed their womenkind to share in the pleasure. The

ladies sat behind lattices, were guarded by eunuchs, and wore long white beards as a disguise, "which gave them the appearance of the most beautiful old men imaginable."

The English Consul, not to be outdone, and indeed going one better than his colleague, caused a special theatre to be erected on his premises, in which by request the amateur troupe gave a series of French and Italian plays. The other Consuls attended, but in the strictest incognito. During the entr'actes refreshments were served to them with marked deference, but they retired before the sit-down repasts which followed the acting, and which were both lengthy and gorgeous.

Present-day members of the British Consular Service may well envy the emoluments which enabled their forerunner to do himself so well. It is improbable that he received anything considerable by way of a fixed salary, but the opportunities enjoyed by the head of an important trading community could not fail to be remunerative in a period when the ox that trod out the corn was not accustomed to wear a muzzle. What is more astonishing is that the official representing a régime of rigid Puritanism should venture to lead so festive a life, and even to countenance theatrical performances which were then anathema in England. One can only conclude that Cromwell's Foreign Office knew little and cared

less about what went on in so distant a locality as Smyrna.

Poor Mr Joseph Edwards, so wealthy and so hospitable, came to a gloomy end, and all through not minding his own business. It happened in this wise.

A third-rate Armenian trader left Smyrna for England to sell a consignment of Indian muslin. He succeeded so well and gave himself such airs that the English people with whom he came into contact took him at his own valuation, as not infrequently happens in such cases even in the twentieth century, and he managed to induce the parents of a young and beautiful girl to give their daughter to him in marriage. The ceremony was duly performed, but at the last moment they seem to have had some glimmering of prudence, and imposed the condition that consummation of the marriage should be postponed until after the arrival of the couple in Smyrna, and until Mr Edwards, to whom the young lady was consigned, should have inquired as to the standing of the Armenian and given his approval.

Husband and wife embarked on the good ship *Success*, the bride being under the care of the captain, who carried out his duties as duenna with all the more fidelity in that he fell in love with her himself. All went according to plan, and they reached Smyrna safely. Here Mr Edwards at once recognised the bridegroom as being entirely unworthy of such an alliance, and promptly

kicked him out with every mark of ignominy. He placed Rachel (this was the girl's Christian name, her surname is not stated) in charge of his wife to act as her companion while waiting to be permanently provided for in a manner suitable to her birth.

Mrs Edwards was the daughter of an English Ambassador to the Sultan, and as such thought no small beer of herself. Rachel unfortunately proved to be as witty and accomplished as she was beautiful, and soon had the young bloods of the English colony at her feet. These consequently ceased paying their accustomed court to Mrs Edwards, whose pride quickly revolted at such neglect of her charms and station; and when Mr Edwards himself succumbed to the enchantress, his wife thought it time to call in the resources of science to her aid. She prepared and administered to her rival a potion of "certain appropriate remedies," the effect being to throw her into a kind of lethargy so closely resembling death that no one raised any objection when the ambassador's daughter nailed her up in a coffin and removed her with indecent haste to the cemetery. They gave her a good funeral with the inevitable discharge of artillery; crêpe, mourning scarves, and gloves were distributed lavishly, and she was duly interred.

Two days later some Englishmen returned from an absence in the country, and sus-

pecting from what they heard that something was wrong, went to the cemetery and dug up the coffin. It was evident that the luckless girl had been buried alive, for the body was still warm, and she had gnawed her fingers in her agony. Poor Rachel, she could hardly have fared worse even as the wife of an inferior Armenian.

The pride of an ambassador's daughter could not be expected to survive the scandal which ensued, and Mrs Edwards soon followed her rival to the cemetery. Mr Edwards too died before long of a broken heart, and almost ruined by the extravagance of his wife.

In 1657, following such obvious precursors of misfortune as an eclipse of the moon and the visit of a comet, a disease which was evidently the influenza of modern times attacked almost every one in the dominions of the Grand Signor, and made nearly as many victims as the plague. It began with a cold and ended with pneumonia. The Chevalier had it badly. "I was," he says, "extremely ill, and I believe I should have died had I obeyed the orders of the Doctors. They absolutely forbade the taking of alcohol in any form or manner, but I drank some brandy after having it burned and putting a large quantity of sugar in it. This liquor, for which I never had a liking, produced an admirable effect. It softened the phlegm with which my chest was clogged, gave me strength to

expel it, and to the disappointment of the Doctors I was up and about again in a few days, and attended the funerals of many persons who were foolish enough to deliver themselves into the Doctors' hands."

Although the Chevalier had an excellent time in Smyrna, and acquired a thorough acquaintance with the mysteries of commerce, he was dissatisfied with the slow progress he made in languages. English and Greek he learned easily enough, but in spite of diligence in the study of Turkish and Arabic, with the aid of such dictionaries and grammars as existed, he made little headway in these two tongues, which he particularly desired to master. None of the foreigners whose society he frequented could speak either, and unfortunately a young man like himself could not venture to associate with Mussulmans on account of the obvious danger to his morals. Accordingly, when the order came for him to proceed to Sidon in Syria with one of the Messieurs Bertandié, it was not unwelcome. The pair were entertained by their friends at farewell banquets and gave feasts in return, all with much magnificence, "for the people of this country pride themselves on doing things better than in any other," and on 7th February 1658 they embarked for Alexandria on board an English ship of forty guns. And there we must leave them.

TO A GENOESE TUNE.—II.

BY ALAN BOTT.

SUSPENSE, that essential prelude to the last act of every drama, was the *motif* of the overture to the final spasmodic movements of the Genoese Russian Ballet.

The reed instruments emitted a sad, vague rhapsody, indicative of M. Tchitcherine's heart-searchings over his reply to Europe's ultimatum-memorandum. The wind-instruments adventured into harmonic discords, wherein French insistence on "categorical acceptance or rejection" conflicted with British anxiety for "a basis of further negotiations." M. Rakowsky, the Soviet cymbalist, clanged propagandist interjections. There were weird crackling sounds, reminiscent of the whip-crackings in the orchestration of the Straussian opera 'Elektra'; for wireless messages in code were apprising the Kremlin of just how much harder M. Tchitcherine considered he could pull Europe's legs, while return messages were apprising the Hotel Imperial at Santa Margharita of just what the new leftward reaction in the Council of People's Commissars must portend for Moscow's policy at Genoa. And the conductor from Criccieth waved the baton of persuasion ever more frantically as the oppos-

ing rhapsodies from the instrumentalists on his Right and the instrumentalists on his Left became ever more difficult of assimilative blending.

Indeed, the conductor from Criccieth twice changed batons during this overture to the last act.

In the first place, he was obliged to discard Dr Benes as mediator-in-chief and custodian of international conciliations. The Premier of Czecho-Slovakia was no longer the Little-Friend-of-all-the-World. In his desire to retain the friendship of everybody, he had blunted the sharp edges of French viewpoints before he exhibited these to the British, had treated British viewpoints similarly when discussing them with the French, and had allowed M. Tchitcherine's blandishments in the matter of a separate treaty with Czecho-Slovakia to influence his Russian mediations. Wherefore, when Mr Lloyd George compared direct notes with M. Barthou on the one hand and M. Tchitcherine on the other, the stock of international confidence in the Little-Friend-of-all-the-World slumped.

Mr Lloyd George's next baton of persuasion was Dr Wirth.

On three afternoons in succession the rotund figure of the German Chancellor was seen in the Villa d'Albertis. Between these three meetings with the British Premier he sandwiched two others with the chief of the Soviet delegation. And clearly there could be no more influential go-between to the Russians than the governmental head of Russia's new ally. The only drawback to Dr Wirth's inspired efforts to persuade M. Tchitcherine into sending a moderate reply was that he imparted wrong impressions. Whether by accident or design, he misled Mr Lloyd George into believing that M. Tchitcherine's answer to the ultimatum-memorandum would warrant a continuance of the Russian negotiations in Genoa.

Which misapprehension caused the garden city secretariat in the Villa d'Albertis to summon the first of two secret conclaves of ministerial scribes.

At home, interest in Genoa was flagging; and even the Liberal press showed an impulse to cry, "Ring down the curtain! The farce is played." Wherefore, interest at home had to be stimulated into acceptance of still further and still more dubious prolongation of the interminable Conference. To suggest inspired commentary in this direction at the twice-daily meetings of British and American correspondents was inadvisable, for the Americans

were shy of "official dope" suggestions, and besides, the wicked Northcliffe press was always represented at these gatherings. It was arranged, therefore, that such commentators as might be inclined to reflect Mr Lloyd George's policy should be specially invited to a special exposition.

"Come to the villa at 3 o'clock. Mention this to *nobody*."

Thus the words spoken in a conspiratorial aside by a publicity attaché to scribes of the Lloyd Georgian clique. So that the discrimination might seem less flagrant, the correspondents of the 'Morning Post' and the 'Manchester Guardian,' whose telegrams had shown independence of judgment, were likewise given the mysterious assignment at the villa—only the three wicked newspapers belonging to Lord Northcliffe and Lord Beaverbrook's 'Daily Express' being excluded.

Eight hired cars, then, carried eight expectant correspondents to the Villa d'Albertis at 3 o'clock of a heat-oppressive afternoon. There, Sir Edward Grigg carefully closed the parlour door, delivered his exposition, and answered whatever questions were put to him. Next day his words were paraphrased in six of the eight newspapers into optimistic deductions and predictions; while the wicked and excluded Northcliffe press continued to cry that the curtain should be rung down on the played farce.

Forty-eight hours later, when the first draft of M. Tchitcherine's impossible reply had been completed, the wicked and excluded Northcliffe press was proved to be right, while the official hints given to the eight commentators were shown to be utterly misleading.

Meanwhile Signor Schanzer, who from the beginning had worked in harmony with Mr Lloyd George, was the last and most successful go-between to carry sweet reason from the Villa d'Albertis to the Soviet hotel. He was able to persuade M. Tchitcherine that if the draft reply—whereof the contents had already been divulged to a correspondent by a bribed propagandist of the Russian delegation—were delivered without amendment, the Conference would end at once, and that the onus of failure must fall unquestionably upon the Russians.

Again there were wireless cracklings to and from Moscow. But Moscow was not in a mood to make further concessions to capitalism, and the most that Signor Schanzer could obtain was the insertion on M. Tchitcherine's last page, following upon eighteen pages of doctrinaire sterility, of the unctuous and involved sentence:—

"The Russian delegation is of opinion that the differences which have appeared in the course of the solution of the financial difficulties between itself and the foreign Powers

ought not to prove an obstacle to the possibility and to the necessity of the solution here in Genoa of the other problems interesting all countries alike, and in the first place the problems touching the reconstruction in the economic sphere of Europe and of Russia, and the consolidation of peace."

For the rest, M. Tchitcherine's final Genoese essay was deemed "incredibly futile" by the French and their associates, and even official spokesmen from the Villa d'Albertis called it "stupid," while protesting that the desire for the solution of European peace problems was a gleam of light through the darkness of insufficiency.

The question of the moment was whether, now that the "stupid" reply had dissipated all hope of a Russian treaty in Genoa, the promised pact of European peace might be arranged. If such a pact could be formulated in a manner acceptable to the whole of Europe, including Russia, Mr Lloyd George would be able to claim a positive and impressive achievement, despite the fiasco of his economic reconstruction policy.

In case the peace pact plan should prove to be as abortive as had the projected Russian treaty, he now sought other justifications for the Genoese adventure. He brought before a meeting of the convening Powers a score of protests,

appeals, and demands from small nations who desired that the Conference should consider their grievances. Typhus, delimitation of frontiers, irredentist minorities, plundered treasures, confiscation of Church properties, freedom of religious thought, commercial isolation—these and other lesser nuisances were released from the Pandora-box opened by the British Premier.

In every case M. Barthou, who wanted to be done with the Conference of lost endeavour as quickly as possible, protested that these grievances were outside its scope; and in nearly every case "the leader of Europe" insisted on their examination by the political sub-commission. Yet two days later, when Mr Lloyd George's scheme for a Conference at the Hague and for a temporary truce of peace had been generally endorsed as a face-saving alternative to the original grandiose programme of Genoa, he was willing enough that these lesser nuisances should either be merely taken note of, or else be buried among the League of Nations' dusty archives.

For the rest, now that the legacies from the Conference of lost endeavour were definitely formulated, finality induced many disclaimers of jealousies and unfriendliness in the past, and assurances of goodwill and friendliness in the future. "Swear that you are not scheming to dissolve our partnership." "I swear it; but

promise that you will not dis-train upon our creditors without my consent." "I promise; but swear that you did not tell my cousin Marietta that I was selfish and bad-tempered." "I swear it; but that you will keep our rendezvous on June 15." "I promise; but promise not to suggest to Uncle Samuel that I am grasping and aggressive." "I promise . . ."

And so to the hurried funeral session, whereat preoccupation with train departures caused the mourners' attention regrettably to wander from Mr Lloyd George's eulogy of the dear, not to say very costly, departed, and from Signor Facta's reading of the last will and testament, which involved liquidation by a meeting of trustees at the Hague. Even M. Tchitcherine's out-of-place acrimonies at the graveside occasioned only shoulder-shrugs of dispassionate tolerance.

Returning from the funeral session of the thirteenth post-war Conference, I read on the information-board of the Casa della Stampa the following just-posted notice: "If those who expect to attend the International Conference at the Hague will apply this afternoon at the offices of the delegation of the Netherlands, the secretariat will be pleased to provide information and advice."

The Conference was dead. Long live the Conference!

Come to think of it, the Conference method of solving the

puzzle of European reconstruction is not so sterile as it seems. During our six and a half weeks in Genoa the two thousand delegates, experts, secretaries, and journalists spent tens of thousands of pounds, hundreds of thousands of francs, millions of lire, billions of marks, kronen, gulden, yen, drachmæ, and other monetary entities. Genoa is the twelfth city thus to benefit by a visit from the big international circus. If the big circus continues its travels for a few more years, it should be able to enrich the business interests of every important city on the Continent.

Only M. Tchitcherine could explain the mechanism of M. Tchitcherine's tortuous though very clever mind. One could merely watch his comings and goings, listen to his sayings, record his doings, and marvel at the gigantic bluff whereby, having sat down at the international poker table with but a few dubious promissory notes, he should be able to rise from the game with a big pile of authentic chips won from his richer opponents.

Almost as inexplicable were his reasons for remaining at Santa Margharita during an apparently inactive fortnight after the Conference of lost endeavour had broken up, and its other protagonists had hurried to their capitals. One theory, which I heard from a member of his delegation staff,

was that he was uncertain how to bank his winnings so as to obtain the maximum of political interest. Away in Moscow, Lenine was seriously, perhaps mortally, sick. If Lenine recovered, Russian policy would continue its swayings toward the Right, toward co-operation with foreign capitalism, toward gradual relinquishment of theoretical communism, toward reconstruction on a basis of private leasehold property. M. Tchitcherine could then claim in his Genoese report to have paved the way for Western co-operation and Western credits. "I have forced the Powers to offer this and that," he could say, "and at the Hague we can force them to offer more. Or, if some of them remain stubborn, why, then, we can fall back upon not only our separate treaty with Germany, but also upon separate treaties with Britain, Italy, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, and half a dozen other States, treaties of which the foundations of which are already builded or planned." But if the might that was Lenine vanished, Russian policy would react toward the Left, toward anti-bourgeois intransigence, toward further Red terrorism. M. Tchitcherine could then stress his rejection of capitalistic attempts to "enslave the Russian people," could point to the fine crop of dissensions he had sown among the Western statesmen, could show how that still more dissensions might

be sown at the Hague before the Soviets obtained from each country individually the help they needed, in exchange for vague promises.

Another theory suggested as the motive of M. Tchitcherine's prolonged stay in Italy was that he desired to negotiate the amending of the Russo-Italian commercial treaty of 1921; and certainly such clauses of that document as did not become public until late in June differed materially from the clauses as set forth last year.

Still another theory was that he remained to continue his contact with Italian notabilities, by means of which, since he first came to Genoa, he had effected so much useful propaganda for Soviet Russia's eligibility, social and political. Here again the suggestion was given colour by events. Besides the international concessionaires who flocked to the Hotel Imperial during the week following the Conference, there were several Italian deputies, and not a few men prominent in both the right and left wings of the Socialist party.

It was altogether fitting that, before he finally left for Berlin, there to extend the scope of the Russo-German pact, M. Tchitcherine should visit Gabriele d'Annunzio, whose newest flamboyancy is to serve as the trumpeter of Socialism, and to proclaim himself the "champion of the proletariat" and the "defender of oppressed

nations"—in which latter connection the Irish, the races of India, and others "suffering" under British rule claim his especial sympathy.

Escorted all the way by detectives and former d'Annunzian legionaries in motors, the Russian Talleyrand drove from Santa Margharita to Gardone Riviera, and there met the poet of moral decadence and patriotic hyperexuberance in the lakeside villa which has provided the latter with the ostentatious seclusion wherefrom he is about to launch his "Sermon in the Garden." Full details of what these brilliant but almost inhuman fantasies said to each other have not been recorded; but it is known that d'Annunzio presented Tchitcherine with a copy of the tremendous and poetic "constitution" for Fiume, which he evolved when "Regent of Carnano"—an even lengthier and more exotic document than any given to the world by Lenine or Tchitcherine. Afterwards, each of the two fantasies protested superlative admiration for the other.

And, indeed, M. Tchitcherine—remember that he formerly was an attaché of the Russian Tsar at the court of the German Kaiser—possesses a social technique that leaves an admirable impression on everybody he meets. Two minor episodes at Genoa left a more vivid impression on my spectatorial mind than any of the full sessions at which Ministers from thirty-four coun-

tries sat down together and rustled papers at each other. One of these was the lionising of M. Tchitcherine at the municipal reception to the international delegates.

Four thousand people—citizens, citizenesses, experts, experts' wives and daughters, secretaries, assistant secretaries, pickpockets with forged cards of entry—had come to the reception in the Palazzo Municipale. They blocked the marble stairway, they flocked around the oblong gallery above the courtyard, they stacked themselves upon every inch of floor-space in the guest-rooms, they backed in swaying uneasy masses into the palm-spattered roof-gardens. Above all, they searched for celebrated Bolsheviks. M. Barthou attracted buzzings and whisperings from the citizens and citizenesses. So did Dr Rathenau; so did Signor Facta; so even did Sir Robert Horne, who was the British Premier's deputy. But clearly it was the Russians—the famous diplomats, new style—whom the Genoese were most anxious to see.

The Russians came up the stairway three abreast, Krassin on the left, then Tchitcherine, then Litvinoff. Behind them there followed in long gymnastic strides a stocky secretary with hair shaved *à la brosse*, and the inevitable tousle-haired chief of the Soviet delegation's police. Sensation in the gallery at the top of the stairs. The Genoese bourgeois

surged toward the Russian proletarians, away from whom eddied widening ripples of exclamatory sibilants: "*Cheeché-reen*." Slender, creamy necks craned forward or sideways. One large-busted woman leaned toward the Russian Talleyrand, and placed in his button-hole, above his red flag, a red, red rose.

And M. Tchitcherine was not one whit embarrassed at his lionisation. He bowed to left and to right like a well-poised automaton, he creased his narrow features into a wide smile, albeit the smile was not reflected in his deep-socketed eyes. Courteously and expansively he acknowledged the welcome of Signor il Sindaco and the city councillors. Deprecatingly, and with careful apologies, he declined the proffer of champagne. Obliging and painstakingly he autographed photographs of himself which the citizenesses had brought for this purpose. He discussed, in terms that revealed him as a connoisseur of more than guide-book standing, the municipal collection of old masters and *objets d'art*. "What a palace to loot!" he might well have thought as he looked around the canvases of Paul Veronese and Alessandro and Aurelio; but his mild-mannered conversation was like that of an American professor on a first visit to Italy.

For the rest, the sole discordant note in his tenour was the small flag of red enamel

in his button-hole, which seemed rather tawdry by comparison with the royal and republican orders worn by other notabilities. Otherwise, he and the others of the proletarian three were more imposing and better groomed than nineteen-twenties of the bourgeois four thousand; so that it was really hard luck on two or three Communist councillors, who had remained true to their principles in that they wore lounge suits, to find the envoys of the world's only Communist Government dressed in what the newspapers of yester-year called "immaculate evening dress."

When, at one o'clock of a starlit morning, the proletarian three passed across the palace courtyard to their car, the bourgeois four thousand, wearied by excitement and overcrowding, sagged into listless solemnity, so that one felt inclined to ask one's neighbour in the cloak-room queue, "Excuse me, but is somebody dead?" Especially solemn, as they took their leave of Signor il Sindaco, were the two or three Communist councillors who had remained true to their principles in that they wore lounge suits. It was said next day that they intended to move with the evolutionary times and order evening clothes, stipulating only that the button-holes should be firm enough to contain small flags of red enamel.

The second minor episode that photographed itself with insistent clarity upon my mind was Mr Lloyd George's visit to the British Seamen's Rest, soon after the moribund Conference had entered upon its final agonies; and irony was the chemical that developed this negative.

From the beginning, Mr Lloyd George had been prolific in the nautical metaphors that constitute so large a section of his oratorical stock-in-trade. Stormy seas, priceless cargoes, sheet-anchors of set purpose, charts of honest endeavour—these and many other marine analogies he had applied to the preposterous voyage on which he had embarked. And now—on an evening when the Conference ship had been almost drowned in oil, and when the Russian, the French, and the Belgian members of the crew were threatening mutiny—he chose to visit the wharf-side Seamen's Rest, whither shipwrecked sailors were brought during the war after their craft had been torpedoed. And his extempore speech to the seamen made the irony of circumstance yet more pointed.

"I am delighted to come to the Seamen's Rest in Genoa," he said. "I am something of a mariner myself." At which point a bibulous mariner from north of the Tweed, who did not know what was happening, called from the stairway, "Is Harry Lauder inside?"

"Here in the Conference," Mr Lloyd George continued, "we have encountered storms and cross-currents and contrary winds. Sometimes we have had to tack in order to continue the voyage. . . . We may make port—I hope we shall. But if we do not, the attempt will have been worth while, and it will be something to go down like men."

All of which was quite impressive, almost pathetic, and, from the viewpoint of the humanist, vastly instructive. On the backless wooden benches, the sailors in their rough jerseys sat still and enthralled, while the Conference skipper took off his pince-nez to wipe away the dimness that harmonised with the tears latent in his sorrowful intonation. He was a male Rachel weeping over the lost children of his ideals; he was Peter the Hermit deploring the stubborn hearts whom he could not recruit for the succour of his metaphorical Jerusalem. Even the distinguished editor of the 'Times,' had he been present, must have been sensible to the compelling pathos of it all.

Yet never have I seen Mr Lloyd George more earnest or more seemingly happy. I do not know if there are Welsh ministers in his ancestry, but this scene in the seamen's mission-hall was unmistakably suggestive of Sunday afternoon in a small Welsh chapel; and one sensed that its delivery was founded on instinctive impulse.

After a tiring and soul-sickening day amid high policies that had gone all awry, he was stimulating new moral courage in himself by orating of moral courage to half a hundred sailors.

Soon, however, the orator-cheapjack succeeded the crusader. Mr Lloyd George went on to relate other marine adventures that were less inspiring—how that he could not bear the Channel swells, and how that once, in war-time, when crossing to France with Sir Maurice Hankey, the pair of them had a contest to decide which could show the greater mastery over the upheavals threatened by their stomachs, and how Sir Maurice had won by eight bouts to nine. And so, the blessed subject of war-time having been introduced, to stock sobstuff about the hardships endured and the brave deeds accomplished by Britannia's seamen in our recent conflict on behalf of civilisation—true words; but have we one-time combatants not had more than enough by now of such head-pattings from politicians who at Versailles all but lost the peace for us? The sailors stirred restlessly on their backless benches.

Here was no longer the mantle of Peter the Hermit. Here was the platform manner of Horatio Bottomley. But later Peter the Hermit was again in emotional evidence. "We will now sing 'Fight the Good Fight,'" announced

the otherwise Scottish minister, after the Premier had concluded with further references to his struggle to bring the Conference bark safely into port. Mr Lloyd George again wiped the dimness from his pince-nez, and sang the hymn with fine resonance, wherein sincerity and an elusive melancholy were indefinably mingled. A woman missionary in the audience sobbed.

A strange mixture indeed, that of the attributes of Peter the Hermit as idealogue, and those of Horatio Bottomley as cajoling demagogue. But if one blends these two opposites by dissolving them in acceptance of Ignatius Loyola's *credo* that all means are justified by greatly conceived ends, do we not obtain the essential essence of Mr Lloyd George's protean personality ?

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

A CONSTITUTION FOR A MUSEUM—SELF-DENYING ORDINANCES—A
DESERT AND NO PEACE—THE WHIGS AND REFORM—DEMOCRACY
—THE WAR IN THE AIR—SIR WALTER RALEIGH: SCHOLAR
AND WIT.

THE Irish Constitution is a pleasant piece of work to put into a museum. It has about it the marks of an untrammelled democracy. All powers of government and all authority are derived from the people. There shall be universal suffrage after the age of thirty, and the impassioned citizens of Southern Ireland, though they may not vote until they are thirty, are eligible to sit in the Dail Eireann as soon as they reach the age of twenty-one. From which we assume that, in Irish eyes, it is a more solemn duty to vote than to legislate. Two articles there are in the Constitution which, unless the Sinn Feiners undergo a sudden change of heart and morals, appear more absurdly fantastic even than the rest. According to Article 6, "the liberty of the person is inviolable, and no person shall be deprived of his liberty except in accordance with law." Truly, if this article be accepted, then the occupation of Michael Collins and his friends will be gone. If these gentry have ever had any policy or plan or aspiration, it has been to violate the liberty (and the life) of the person. The instruments of their statecraft have

been (and are) the revolver and the bomb, whose purpose has been to violate the liberty and to destroy the life of all those who have dared to disagree with them. What, then, shall they do when, by their own Constitution, they are forbidden to pursue their favourite pastimes of arson and assassination? Without their wonted weapons, they will be found incapable of governing or even of forcing the free and independent electors to do their bidding at the hustings.

Still more difficult of acceptance will prove Article 7, which ordains that "the dwelling of each citizen is inviolable, and shall not be forcibly entered except in accordance with law." The law, indeed, will be very easily flexible, if it permits the violation of dwelling-houses for the customary purposes of murder and of theft. Had Article 7 been in force two years ago, Michael Collins would have been shorn of half his glory, and the war-chest of Sinn Fein would have been empty. The Irish are never tired of boasting about the splendid work they did on that bloody Sunday, when they murdered a band of unarmed British soldiers whom they caught peaceably in bed

with their wives. Think of what a noble deed Ireland's heroic annals would have been deprived had not Michael Collins' friends been encouraged to enter the hotel wherein were domiciled the unsuspecting officers! How, in brief, except by forcible entry and by the free use of firearms, could Mr Lloyd George's new allies have proved their fitness to govern their country and to see justice done, even to those who decline to obey them?

We do not suppose that these self-denying ordinances will be long or scrupulously respected. Michael Collins and his henchmen are not likely to change their natures in an hour or to substitute statesmanship for the pleasanter methods of rapine and slaughter. Articles 6 and 7 are merely an essential part of the essential unreality. The Irish Constitution, as we have said, should be in a museum. It should take its place in a glass case among the rarer specimens of political folly, labelled "grotesque and ineffectual." In the first place, it is inexcusable for a State to make terms with a sister State rebelliously armed against it. In the South of Ireland there are two, if not three, armies, ready to fly at each other's throat, ready also to combine, at a moment's notice, against Great Britain. The making of a treaty, the drafting of a constitution, are enterprises which require good wills and cool heads. In Ireland there are neither cool heads nor good wills. While the

treaty and the constitution have been discussed, crimes have been incessant and well-organised. The British Government, having washed its hands of Ireland, has been content to mutter, "It doesn't matter: it's only Irishmen killing Irishmen." A monstrous statement, which proves that Mr Lloyd George and his friends have openly renounced the chief of their functions, which is to govern. Even though they have made themselves the humble servants of Michael Collins, even though Mr Churchill solemnly rises in the House of Commons and proclaims that the draft of the Irish Constitution is published by the courtesy of Michael Collins—why is it that Michael Collins is always described as "courteous"?—the British Government is still responsible for the lives and properties of British citizens in Ireland, whose lives have been brutally put an end to, and whose houses have been burned. It cannot thus nonchalantly put off the burdens which it is paid to bear, and its supine refusal to resist or punish murder, its acceptance of ignoble terms at the threat of a pistol, have "created an atmosphere," as the cant phrase has it, wholly unfavourable to the making of a sane and equal agreement.

In the second place, the agreement has been signed by those who have no authority which does not rest upon blackmail and intimidation. Mr Lloyd George, in one of his

many contradictory statements, said that he would parley with any one who could deliver the goods. The man whom he chose for this delicate office was Valera. Valera could not deliver the goods, and when Valera failed to deliver the goods, Mr Lloyd George was unperturbed by the rebuff. At last the goods, such as they were, were delivered by Michael Collins, and if his delivery satisfies any loyal Englishman, that loyal Englishman is very easily pleased. For the goods handed over by Michael Collins are not genuine goods. They are basely counterfeit. At the very moment when Michael Collins was professing loyalty to the "Treaty," he was telling his friends in America and elsewhere that the "Treaty" was but a stepping-stone to a free and unhampered republic. The only difference between Valera and Collins is that Collins said he would take two bites at his cherry, while Valera preferred to swallow his whole. In honesty at any rate the man from the Bowery has the better of it.

What faith, then, can we profess in the agreement, what confidence can we feel that the provisions set forth in the constitution will ever be respected? It is provided in the preamble "that if any provision of the constitution or any amendment thereof or any law made under it is in any respect repugnant to the Treaty, it shall, to that extent, be absolutely void." Now there remains in the "Treaty" the

thing which was accepted by the members of the British Cabinet as an oath of loyalty to the Crown. We know not which is worse: the ridiculous formula of evasion or the bad grammar in which it is expressed. Formula and bad grammar are alike immaterial, for the oath has no meaning either for Collins or Valera, republicans both, and at last in coalition. They have taken a lesson out of Mr Lloyd George's book. They have seen how easily that demagogue controls a House of Commons, which might be hostile to him, by coalescing with such humble opponents as Mr Chamberlain, who dare not call his soul his own in the presence of his master. And Messrs Valera and Collins have a means of cementing their coalition, hitherto beyond the reach of Messrs Lloyd George and Chamberlain. They can see to it that the independent candidates are forcibly prevented from coming to the polls, and the same instruments which have served them so well in the intimidation of Mr Lloyd George will avail to intimidate the more modest candidates who attempt to represent, without leave given, the constituencies of Southern Ireland. Henceforth, then, the Dail Eireann will be a tied house. While Valera nominates fifty-seven, Collins will have sixty-four henchmen at his back, and as soon as they are elected, according to plan, they will form one coalition

and be omnipotent. And woe be to him who dares to interfere! He may be wounded in four places or more, or he may lose his beard, as Mr Darell Figgis has lost his. We have been told, indeed, that the outrage wreaked upon Mr Darell Figgis will send a shudder through the civilised world. Evidently it is difficult to estimate the comparative gravity of this outrage or that. Some will think that the murder of Mrs Lindsay has a pre-eminence among outrages. Others will deplore most deeply the slaughter of officers in Dublin. Others again remember most distinctly the vile brutalities and mutilations done upon innocent men. Apparently there are those who think that these wickednesses weigh as nothing in the balance against Mr Figgis's beard. We who have never seen Mr Figgis or his beard, which is reported auburn, can take little interest in him or it; and the mere fact that the punishment meted out to him has appeared of deeper consequence than the many and cruel deaths of blameless men and women, goes to prove that the Sinn Feiners have lost all sense of proportion, and are not fit to be trusted with the government even of a single parish. How shall levity such as theirs deal out justice with an equal hand to friend or foe?

And ever since the "truce" began—the truce which was heralded by such an outburst of self-congratulation as was

never seen before, and (we trust) will never be seen again—the state of Ireland has become worse and worse. The heroes of Southern Ireland, faithful to the injunction of the illustrious Duffy, have used all the lead in the North which they could lay their hands on. They have determined to solve the question of the boundary after their own way. They will make the six counties uninhabitable, they boast, and then it will not matter where the boundary is drawn. Ulster, with her industries destroyed by fire and her citizens shot or threatened by snipers, will plead for peace on any terms. Collins and his friends frightened Mr Lloyd George by these simple means. Why should not the same terror be equally effective in the North of Ireland? It will not be equally effective in the North, because Sir James Craig is not malleable or easily intimidated like our own great Prime Minister. He is a man of principle, who knows what he wants, who is determined to put an end to murder and arson, and who will do his best to protect the men and the territories for whose safety he is responsible.

Meanwhile the British Government has made little or no attempt to protect those who have served it, or to avenge the deaths of those who have been murdered for no worse crime than serving the British Government. Soldiers have been kidnapped and massacred,

and none has suffered for the crimes. The faithful members of the R.I.C. have been plundered and killed, and they whom they served have neither mitigated their sufferings nor punished their assassins. Yet the men of the R.I.C. deserved all the consideration and protection which could be given them. They have worked for the once United Kingdom with the greatest loyalty and address. And they have been turned out unprotected and uncared-for upon a hostile world. History does not show us many worse episodes than this, and every citizen who aids or approves the maintenance in power of the present Coalition must take his share of the national dishonour. Moreover, the callousness and indifference of the British Government have done a vast deal to make light of the crime of murder. The South of Ireland, under the auspices of Mr Lloyd George and his friend Collins, has been reduced to a condition of anarchy. The courts do not sit, and all crimes go unpunished. Law, order, and justice are suspended, and it is not easy to see how all the paper constitutions in the world or a hundred sham elections, controlled by the pistol in the name of democracy, can avail to restore a comely decent life. Where the pistol and the bomb hold sway, a return to good government is impossible. Not even the permission to use the Irish language, which nobody in Ireland understands,

will bring peace to an assassin's paradise. When the Transport Workers establish their soviets, the priggish constitution, which the courtesy of Michael Collins allowed us to see, will be cast into the waste-paper basket, and the successors of Collins and Griffith will reduce Ireland to the misery and famine which have submerged Russia. Truly, if they are not restrained, they will make a desert, and not even that inflexible Unionist, Mr Chamberlain, will dare to call it peace.

It is a commonplace of criticism that in writing the history of England the Whig dogs have always had their way. The hold which they have attempted to keep upon recorded opinion is not weakened by Mr G. M. Trevelyan's 'British History in the Nineteenth Century' (London: Longmans & Co.) There is in Mr Trevelyan's work an appearance of impartiality. There is scarce a politician upon either side whom he does not cover with his praise. In his eyes they are honourable men—all honourable men; and as you turn over his pages you begin to regard your own country with pride and wonder, that at all crises and at all hazards it has produced statesmen fit to hold the helm of Government. A little thought will assure you that they cannot all have been right, and you close Mr Trevelyan's book with the conviction that, in spite of his

indiscriminate approval, he is saturated in the doctrines and prejudices of the Whigs.

Let us take as a test of Mr Trevelyan's method his treatment of the Reformers, who hastened to frame themselves and their opinions upon the model of revolutionary France. He seems to think that the vigorous opposition to the miscreants who, when the peace of their country and the survival of their constitution were at stake, clamoured for annual parliaments and universal franchise, were based upon a mere love of reaction and obscurantism. Now reaction and obscurantism, excellent as they are of themselves and in their results, had nothing to do with the fierce anger which arose in England against Fox and Hardy and Priestley and many another. These men inspired the fear and hatred of their fellow-countrymen, because they loudly mimicked the titles and phrases of the French revolutionaries. They spoke of His Majesty the People; they formed themselves into Conventions and Corresponding Societies. Was it strange, therefore, that they should be suspected of desiring to depose the king and to destroy the constitution? Fox hailed with rapture the failure of the British on the Continent as he had hailed it in America. Where England had enemies he found friends, and his name was struck off the list of Privy Councillors (he narrowly escaped

the Tower), not because he devoutly wished to extend the franchise, but because he spoke with the tongue of a traitor. As for Priestley, he was, as Mr Trevelyan admits, "singularly deficient in patriotic feeling"; and since at the moment when he was troublesome the citizen who was not for England was against her, Priestley well deserved the hard treatment that he received. But the Whig then cared little what became of his country, so long as he was permitted to repeat aloud the commonplaces of disloyalty. "Acts of Parliament," says Mr Trevelyan, "were passed suppressing the Corresponding and other societies, and so rendering illegal the first efforts of the working classes to interest themselves in politics, and to get together for education and discussion." The working classes and their leaders, as everybody but a Whig should know, wanted to get together, not that they might discuss education, but that they might imitate the Jacobins of France, bring their king to the scaffold, and enjoy untrammelled the freedom of the guillotine.

So Fox, hating his own country, sided with the reformers, who were Jacobins and republicans at heart, and thus destroyed, as Mr Trevelyan confesses, "his own career and his own good name." Thus for once was justice done to a dangerous politician. But Fox did more than destroy his own good name, if we may believe Mr Trevelyan. "He

prevented the Whigs from becoming bottle-holders to the anti-Jacobin Tories, and so enabled England, many years after his own death, to obtain reform without revolution." To make Fox responsible for what happened in 1832 is manifestly unfair, and much as we dislike both Fox and reform, we refuse to believe that that which Gladstone called a perfect constitution—the constitution of England before 1832—was sacrificed to the memory or to the influence of Charles James Fox.

Mr Trevelyan, being a faithful worshipper of Fox, takes it for granted that what is called "parliamentary reform" is a good of itself. He assumes that man is a voting animal, that there is an inherent virtue in the process of dropping a marked paper in the ballot-box. And indeed the history of the nineteenth century is the history of the extended franchise. The years 1832, 1866, and 1884 prepared the way for the purposeless, unasked-for betrayal of 1917. We are all voters now, whether we want it or not. The ballot-box spares not sex, and presently it will cease to spare youth, at present immune from the infection. Nothing is left for the subversive politician but to advocate enfranchisement of the infant in the cradle, and his claim to share in the government of the country is as well founded as the claim of the majority of the newly enfranchised.

And since it is the universal

custom to extol what appears incurable, we praise "democracy," our system of popular government, which was the free gift of the nineteenth century, as though it contained the secret of universal happiness. We give it fantastic names, such as Liberty, though its chief function is to curtail the only liberty which is worth having. We compare it to natural forces, and tell one another, in the whispering voice of awe, that it is noble, relentless, and universal like the wind or the sea. We shout aloud that the will of the people shall prevail; and while we do our best to thwart it, we know that it is the will, not of the people, but of the odd man. Thus we owe to the consistent policy of the nineteenth century a system which is not merely a danger but a piece of hypocrisy. In truth, it is hypocrisy begot of hypocrisy. Even when we talk nonsense about the rights of man, we know (or we should know) that we are talking nonsense. The franchise has been conceded not as a right, natural or unnatural. It has been conceded either in fear or as a piece of cunning policy. The politicians who have been most busy in distributing votes have been either afraid to govern or sadly conscious that they could not restrain the people, which they make sticky with flattery, from acts of purposeless violence. They have desired to cast off from their own feeble shoulders the burden

of responsibility, and they hope that the people's back is broad enough to bear it. When the vote has not been given in abject surrender, it has been given in the eager expectancy that the new electors will be moved by gratitude to support their patrons at the hustings. A vain expectancy! In six months the new citizens are so little mindful of their benefactors or their privileges that they have forgotten at whose instigation they are enfranchised, and how they are desired to use their new-gotten vote.

However, the rhetoric of the nineteenth century has contrived it that we are all voters, and it is well to attempt an estimate of what we have gained by the favour conferred upon us. As Lord Bryce has explained to the world in an exhaustive survey, that which by a pleasant irony is called "government by the people" is accompanied always by corruption. Graft and boodle are the inevitable handmaidens of democracy. No organised body of voters ever put any other questions to itself than, "Where do we come in?" or, "What shall we get out of it?" To the leaders the profit generally comes in the shape of solid cash. To the rank and file the profit may most often be represented in an injustice done to a rival class. Those who aspire to "lead" the people frankly pander to its worst passions, while the people itself gaily confuses "political

liberty" with an opportunity of blackmail. So it comes about that democracy degrades both those who vote and those who are voted for. And by the finest irony of all, universal suffrage means the death of popular government. Whether it be good or evil, popular government cannot bear the strain of one man (and one woman) one vote. In the first place, a privilege which is granted to all soon seems not worth having, and the voters refuse to be at the pains to visit the polling-booth. In the second place, even if the voters exercised the right to obtain which they have fought and clamoured, they would be so severely drilled by the party managers that they would neither act nor think for themselves. In other words, the machine becomes supreme; political principle is discarded as old-fashioned; and the man who directs the machine has no difficulty in making himself an unauthorised, ill-instructed autocrat.

Thus we hear nothing of the country's good, nothing of leadership. Cunning takes the place of patriotism, and he seems the wisest leader who contrives to follow at the same moment the largest crowds. Then swells the party chest. The wealthy bid one against another for what are grimly called "honours," and the citizen pays the highest sum for his peerage whose life in the past has been most disreputable.

The result is that year after year we assist at a sinister farce; and since it is our habit to call things by their wrong names, we brag of representative government, and pretend to ourselves that the popular will is prevailing.

Let us go back to 1918, and ask ourselves for what purposes the present Government was returned to office. After a vast deal of manœuvring and the lavish distribution of "coupons," we were told, in a hundred election addresses, that it was Mr Lloyd George's intention to empty the pockets of the Germans and to bring the Kaiser to trial. The poor silly voters, bamboozled by stump-orations and perplexed by passionate appeals, transmitted by telegram, believed that they were taking part in an heroic plan of vengeance. They used their voice, which they have been told is the voice of God, to insist upon punishment and reparation. They saw the Kaiser, in their pleasant fancy, dangling at the end of a rope. They pictured a million policemen rapidly going through the pockets of harassed and repentant Germans. As many of them as could be conveyed in comfortable motor-cars to the polling-booths cast their votes for the obedient henchmen of Mr Lloyd George, and confidently awaited the event. Happily the Kaiser was not brought to trial. At least we were spared that folly. And Mr Lloyd George was easily persuaded

that Germany, being England's enemy, was his friend. Instead of emptying her pocket, he expressed a fervent wish to fill it, and was ready, even eager, to sacrifice the friendship of France, at whose side we had fought, in a vain attempt to set the Germans on their feet again.

Mr Lloyd George, in truth, having made himself an undisputed autocrat for five years, forgot all about his promises, and set about doing precisely what he chose. His obedient colleagues hung upon his words, and willingly did their best to carry out not the wishes of the people, whose voice no longer sounded like the voice of God, but the wishes of Mr Lloyd George. Thus most easily they kept their seats and drew their salaries. Mr Austen Chamberlain and the other Unionists, being pledged to preserve Great Britain and Ireland as one kingdom, hastened to surrender to the revolver and the bomb. If they could not take murder by the throat, at least they could take it by the hand. Thus was representative government reduced to an absurdity. The members of Parliament got what they wanted, a long tenure of their places—but at what a cost! The unhappy voters, however unintelligent they may be, must have discovered that they are the dupes of designing men, that all the flattery poured forth upon them at the hustings was the mere gabble of interested suppliants.

When the vote was forced upon everybody, we were told that we must educate our masters. Most of our masters are incapable of education, and the Coalition has placed political education far beyond the reach of those who might have learned. The Coalition is, indeed, a great labour-saving device. Not only does it assure the permanence of salaries, but it suspends entirely wholesome argument and the conflict of opinions. Now political education can best be given by public meetings. Among the many merits of party government—merits which some years of Coalition have taught us to appreciate at their proper worth—is the opportunity which it affords of clear and candid discussion. The rare intelligent voter may be taught something of truth and wisdom by listening to an overstatement of either case. And the representative, still amenable to the approval of his supporters, must needs visit his constituency and justify his action. A Coalition makes these salutary customs unnecessary. When opportunism takes the place of principle, when nothing is “relevant” to politics except the punctual payment of salaries, the member of Parliament is not such a fool as to consult or enlighten his supporters, and so the education of those whom we call our masters at the time of an election is forgotten and unachieved.

Evil as the influence is upon

electors and elected of the superstition which has been called indifferently democracy, political liberty, representative government, the superstition is especially dangerous when it is encouraged in a State whose duty it is to control a large empire. For a large empire can be held together only by statesmen who have both the will and the power to govern. What is needed in the governors of an empire is resolution and continuity. And no democracy was ever resolute or continuous. Swayed either by their own passions or by the passions of those who depend upon their support, the voters change as rapidly as the wind shifts or as the sunshine follows an April shower. They are swayed rather by words than by thoughts. Of the many thousands who in 1906 surrendered themselves wholly to the parrot-cry of Chinese labour, a mere handful knew what the cry meant or understood to whom they thought injustice was being done, and not a few are convinced that they were fighting against the enforced wearing of pigtails by themselves. How, then, shall such men as these presume to dictate what shall be done in India or in Egypt, countries of which they are and will always be necessarily ignorant? The truth is that the election of members of Parliament is a complete gamble, as surely the result of chance as if they were chosen by lot; and we cannot expect to see our great depen-

dencies administered with wisdom and justice so long as those who administer them depend for their position upon an unlettered and impressionable democracy.

And now that the folly and danger of the democratic superstition are being found out at home, it is our pleasant habit to enforce abroad the principle of the ballot-box. We attempt to obtrude this principle upon countries where it is not wanted and will not be appreciated. We hear that the West Indies are to enjoy the same inestimable privileges which have been thrust upon East India. Wherever we carry our voting papers, we carry corruption and instability. And if the madness of imposing representative government upon all men, civilised and uncivilised alike, be not checked, then our dependencies will first of all break away from us, and then be submerged in anarchy and ruin.

Perhaps, however, we shall some day come to our senses, and discover that it is hardly worth while to destroy civilisation merely to keep alive an exploded superstition. Where one class pays the taxes and another class rules, we can look for neither justice nor honour, and the time will come when we shall ask ourselves whether it is worth while to accept the destruction of all those things which make our life of value to us merely that we may doggedly repeat such foolish formulæ as "political freedom," "representative government,"

"vox populi vox Dei." Democracies are notoriously short-lived. Wherever they have arisen they have died of their own excesses. We know not yet from what corner of the sky salvation shall come to us; but we do know that, if a decent and orderly life is still to be lived upon this continent, the twentieth century must mitigate or annul the baleful work accomplished in the field of democratic politics by the nineteenth.

It is something of a paradox that the last work of Sir Walter Raleigh, 'The War in the Air' (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press), should have been the history of a great modern adventure, written upon a large scale. To those who knew Raleigh, whose death a vast number of friends and disciples are deploring, only by his works, he may have seemed somewhat detached from the life about him, and intent upon the niceties and elegancies of style. The most of his books deal with the past, in which the superficial critic might think Raleigh was finding an escape from reality. The superficial critic, of course, would have been wrong. Like all good writers, Raleigh had an intense interest in all that was about him. Whatever he read he put always to the test of life, and thus found the best, the only commentary for the books which he loved full well. When he sat him down to write, for the first time, an account of the

war in the air, he chose such a theme as would always have engrossed his active temperament, and excellently has he performed his allotted task. He has adapted his style perfectly to the matter in hand, and has written a history of flying, alas! a fragment only, which is dignified, well-planned, and a model of vigorous lucid English.

It is the less strange that Raleigh, a student and a professor by habit and training, should have thrown himself enthusiastically into the task of recording this, the latest phase of warfare, because not only was the war from the first something very real and vivid to him, but his mind was always alert to catch new impressions. He was absorbed wholly in the war. He thought about it, talked about it, wrote about it, and when he undertook to be the historian of the air, he learned all that he could of the aircraft which it was his business to describe, and of the element in which they worked and fought. Indeed, it was a long flight which he undertook for the sake of gaining experience that caused his death, the death not of a scholar but of a man of action. His book nowhere smells of the lamp. It is a record of men and of men's endurance. With an unflinching sense of truth and fidelity to historical tradition, Raleigh has inserted in his work such brief characters of his heroes as make them live upon the printed

page. For him the story of the Air Force is the story of a great adventure, nothing less than the Epic of Youth. He regards the flying men with the eye of enthusiasm. "The greatest creation of all," he writes, "the temper of the new force, was not so much a creation as a discovery. Good machines and trained men, however great their number, are not enough to win a war. War is a social affair, and wars are won by well-knit societies. The community of habits and ideas which unites civilised mankind is too loose a bond for this purpose; it has too much in it of mere love of comfort and ease and diversion. Patriotism will go further, but for the making of a first-class fighting force patriotism is not enough. A narrower and a tighter loyalty and a closer companionship are needed, as every regiment knows, before men will cheerfully go to meet the ultimate realities of war. They must live together and work together and think together." Such is the spirit in which Raleigh has composed his part of the history of the air, and it is a lasting and a bitter regret that the book will be finished by another hand.

But as we remember Walter Raleigh we know that the man was greater than his work. Ingenious as was his criticism, his converse with his fellows were yet more ingenious. He liked talk, talk ample and unrestrained. He loved jests,

his own and those of others, and it was not the least happy trait in his character that his own jests inspired him to a frank and gay laughter. Thus he agreed with Charles Lamb in denouncing, practically, an ancient and a popular error. He loved the world, and bore himself bravely in it, giving all that he had in him of fun and hilarity to those about him. And though he had never the air of a scholar, he not only was deeply versed in scholar-

ship himself, but he and his teaching were constant inspirations to scholars. As there was a gaiety in his scholarship, so there was a scholarship in his gaiety, and while his books will always be read by those who appreciate wise criticism and sound English, so he will still be remembered in the Oxford, where he founded a school, and by his friends, whom he delighted, in familiar talk, by the swiftness of his wit.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXII.

AUGUST 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

THE LAST DAYS OF DUBLIN CASTLE.

BY PERISCOPE.

"Ther saugh I first the derke imagining
Of felonye and al the compassing :
The cruel ire reed as any glede,
The pykepurs and eke the pale drede ;
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke,
The shepne brenning with the blake smoke,
The treson of the mording in the bedde,
The open werre with woundes al bi-bledde."

—CHAUCER, *Knights Tale*.

I. THE LAST OF THE IRISHMEN.

COOL, relentless, calculating—a man of narrow ideas but inflexible in carrying them out, a man whom Mr Walter Long "found," and who repaid that discovery with a strange unswerving devotion—this was the man whom an easy-going Under-Secretary had as his chief assistant, and an honest but blundering Viceroy came to regard as his guide, philosopher, and—we had almost said friend. But there were few who could find in the stern qualities of the Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir John Taylor, that fertile tilth on which the rich blossom

of friendship grows. Had he been a leader of men—which he was not—he might have been a born general,—ruthless in carrying out a plan, finding his joy not in the victory, but in the fierce endeavour which led up to it.

He was the last of those who, to the Ireland without, typified "Dublin Castle" for all time,—a machine, a car of Juggernaut that crushed the victims beneath its wheels, while in the temple within the lordly priests and the temple maidens—fair and sometimes frail, if the whispers of Dublin Society

for the last hundred years are to be believed—made a jest of life. Not that Sir John cared aught for these things: his well-built figure and passionless face with cold blue eyes might be seen at levees, but his spirit was not there. Perhaps it roamed in the rose-garden where he toiled fiercely in his moments of relaxation, or in some wild mountain pass in the Wicklow hills whose glamour held something even for him in his early days. His ways were too abrupt for the finer shades of society: even amongst men there was something brooding and impetuous in his manner that rendered conversation difficult. The play of wit, the softer lights and tones of easy talk, were shattered in his presence. For his whole soul had gradually become possessed of a devil—the devil of work.

It was this devil that played the deuce with him. It wandered through waste places, seeking rest and finding none. It did not lead him into a mountain of vision from whence he might have seen the pitfalls that lay here and there, the winding ways that, if less direct, yet would have led more surely to the desired end—the pacifying of a people. There was something Roman in this character. He drove his road straight on to the goal he had set. Had there been some engineer of wider outlook to guide the way, Sir John would have served him well. He would have hewn the rocks

and cast down mountains into the morasses, but the finer work of examining the strata of the ground and guessing where some subterranean water-course ran was beyond his schooling.

From the year 1919 he secured and held the reins. For this he had striven for years. In Mr Walter Long's brief Chief Secretaryship, when still an official of junior rank, he had had the post of Under-Secretary within his grasp, but with the change of administration over-much political zeal—a damning characteristic for any servant of the State—had blasted his hopes and relegated him for ten years or more to comparative oblivion. In the year 1918 he had obtained the post of Assistant Under-Secretary. A mystery surrounds this promotion. . . .

"Sceptres and thrones came tumbling down."

An English Under-Secretary disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, to make way for whom? Some said for Sir John, only that a Judge of high standing pulled another string; and lo! the Under-Secretaryship went into hands for which it was not intended, those of Mr MacMahon, the Secretary of the G.P.O., who, backed by the power of the Roman Catholic Church, and with a native astuteness against which brute force dashed itself in vain, knew the moment when the wheel had come full circle.

From the very moment of

his appointment Sir John set himself to seize the reins of power. Like the Turk, he could brook no brother near the throne. He had the art of making himself indispensable, or, at any rate to the uninited, of appearing to be so. And, indeed, he had qualifications which were possessed by only one other Castle official—namely, an intimate knowledge of the mode of setting the Crimes Act machinery to work. That machinery had become rusted, but Sir John, with greasy waste and oil-can, set himself to work to examine the joints of its harness. He coupled it up with the brand-new machinery of D.O.R.A., and evolved something which certainly moved, even though it might not move in the desired direction or marshal behind it an orderly series of ballast-waggons destined to set in order the permanent way.

But so inveterate in work was he that this activity was but one side of his functioning. He caught up every branch of the office work—finance, crime, appointments. His remarkable accuracy and his retentive memory aided him in this, but the result was to crush out all sense of initiative in those whom he controlled. Other people's ideas were useless to him, for he was intolerant of any but his own. The slightest detail must be worked out according to his traditions; the slightest deviation into originality was regarded as an offence. His ultra-conservatism

in politics was translated into action in his office administration.

What was the result? The mind that should have bent itself solely to the task of envisaging the ever-growing problem of Sinn Fein was occupied with a mass of detail. The files of thirty years ago were searched through for light to deal with a fresh series of events. He failed to see that the agrarian troubles of those days were but a pale shadow of the spectre that was to haunt the island for years to come; that a wider vision was needed and bolder methods called for—bolder, not perhaps in the spirit of repression, but in the spirit of generosity. The Under-Secretary gave no lead; the Viceroy, Lord French, was by training unfitted to cope with the delicacy of the political situation; the Chief Secretary, Mr Macpherson, took his colour from his advisers.

Had these three characters been different, Sir John would never have attained to the importance he reached. He was the one man who knew his mind, who had a tradition inbred in him. Though he had no Northern blood in his veins, he was possessed of the spirit of the Ulsterman. He had made up his mind, and he went through with it—an admirable figure in many walks of life, the stuff from which martyrs are made and heroes of adversity created; but Molière in his comedies has exposed the weakness of such, the tragedies

to which such a temper may often give birth. *Tempora mutantur, nos et in illis*: if we change not, it is not our age but we who are shattered.

II. CASTLE RULE IN 1919.

Sir John Taylor never courted popularity with his staff, and he certainly never achieved it. He lacked the saving touch of humour that brings contact between the minds and intellects of men. Leniency was to him weakness, compromise a negation of principle. The history of the retirement of the easy-going courteous Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, General Sir Joseph Byrne, is still shrouded in mystery—but why inquire? Are not such kaleidoscopic changes the commonplaces of the Coalition administration? Some whispered that the Commander-in-Chief disliked him, others that the Viceroy did not share his views as to a more moderate method of administration, and there was the incompatibility of temperament between the General and the Assistant Under-Secretary. Add to these that there was a Deputy Inspector-General, a dour Northern with years of Belfast atmosphere ingrained in his soul, whose views were after the heart of Sir John, and who, at a price, would take on the duties of Inspector-General. Hence arose the Gilbertian situation for which the British public has been paying for over two years. General Byrne

has never been dismissed. The Viceroy had promised to find him another post, and had granted him leave of absence. But generals were at this era a drug in the market, and Colonial Governorships could not go round all. So, until June of the present year, when he was appointed Governor of the Seychelles Islands, General Byrne drew his full pay as Inspector-General month by month, and coyly directed the attention of his ultimate successor to any oversight in the granting of his yearly increments. His immediate successor drove a hard bargain: he recognised the mutability of all human things, and insisted on a special pension in the event of his early retirement. He now enjoys it, and long may he do so.

Like the history of the Kings, the Inspectors-General in rapid succession have slept with their fathers, and some one else has reigned in their stead. Yet one official, a staunch friend of the Assistant Under-Secretary, weathered the storm; and every one, friend or foe, who has had the chance to meet the Chief Crown Solicitor, Sir Henry Wynne (or Harry Wynne, as he is known to most), rejoices that his honest manliness amidst a world of

intrigue stood inviolate. His close friendship with Sir John Taylor could only have been founded on political sympathies, for apart from the fact that both were ultra-Tories, they had only one other trait in common—namely, an immense capacity for hard work. But while this rendered the one impatient and quick-tempered, in the other it only served to bring out the lovable qualities of the man—his infinite patience and unvarying tact, the courtliness that made him ever thoughtful and considerate to the humblest of officials. In truth, “he was a veray, parfit gentil knight.” Nothing could ruffle him. No irateness on the part of those higher in authority than himself, who in the next régime sought to do things by short-cuts and disliked the logic of his legal vision, could evoke from his lips anything but the gentlest of replies. His knowledge of every branch of law was immense, and though his opponents may have seen something of bitterness in his presentation of the case, they wronged him. He was not one who would take unfair advantages. He was one who would temper justice with humanity.

He, like Sir John Taylor, however, misjudged the strength of Sinn Féin. The Criminal Injuries Act of 1919 was largely their joint-creation, and it is typical of the men that the Government of Ireland Bill, which was on the stocks at the same time, was regarded

by them as a kind of side-show, an excrescence which need not be taken seriously, and which would very shortly be ruthlessly removed by a Conservative knife. The Criminal Injuries Act was intended to hit hard at the pockets of the rate-payers. It was imagined that a blow on that tender part of their anatomy would end their enthusiasm for Sinn Féin. Of that theory more will be said at a later stage: it is sufficient here to state that it quite failed in its object.

The trouble towards the close of 1919 was growing steadily and ominously. The police knew it was there. The murder of a Resident Magistrate in Westport early in 1919 was an affair which was never satisfactorily solved, but indicated the powerlessness of the police in tracking down criminals in the existing spirit of the country. Spasmodic murders and shootings followed through the year, seditious literature was rife. The police intelligence system was peculiar. In ordinary times, when the policeman lived as a member of the community, it was possible for local gossip to reach the ears of a wideawake sergeant or District Inspector, and the clue thus given could be readily followed up. Of criminal investigation work in the sense understood by Scotland Yard there was none: digesting of outrage reports at headquarters for the information of the Chief Secretary was its furthest reach of imagination. Now, when

the policeman was gradually becoming ostracised, the local sources of reliable information were drying up. The Military Intelligence system was equally haphazard, but better centralised. Only one Force was really adequately fitted by training for the work, and that was the Detective Force of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Dublin, always the spider's web of intrigue, in its back alleys, in its semi-artistic, semi-fanatical coteries, had always afforded a good training-ground for the rôle of a detective. But unfortunately the specialists were few in number and well known, and they were speedily marked down and wounded, or done to death. The net was drawing closer. It was evident that at any time officials themselves might become the target. One after the other the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Police, the Inspector-General of the Constabulary, Sir Henry Wynne, and Sir John Taylor ceased to live abroad, and the residential portion of Dublin Castle became their homes. The gate of the Upper Castle Yard had been kept closed for some time. Now the main gate of the Lower Yard followed suit, and a permanent guard of police and military challenged all comers.

Out in the Phoenix Park the Chief Secretary's and Vice-Regal Lodges assumed more and more the appearance of block-houses. Half-hearted attacks were being made on police barracks in the South and West.

Yet the military assistance was confined to the action in aid of the Civil Power laid down in text-books of Military Law. There was no one of sufficient weight, driving force, and, above all, vision to take the lead and decide what the situation required. The majority of the nation was asking for a republic, and behold, they were offered the futility of a Government of Ireland Act. At this date they would assuredly have taken less than they asked, but an Act which, to keep a Coalition alive, tried to embody the political tenets of both parties was a panacea that was doomed to failure at the outset.

So came the close of the year 1919. The guidance of Irish policy was, in one sense, in the hands of the British Cabinet, but their outlook was utterly remote from actuality. They lived on the theories of Liberalism tinged by the medievalism of the Ulster Covenant, their flute-notes and the roll of the Orange drum making a discordant harmony. A Home Rule Bill and an Education Bill were their remedies. In Ireland the facts were better known, and there was left there to grapple with them a junta of Government officials, without real power, with limited responsibility, honest but encrusted with old traditions, and therefore a source of weakness when face to face with a danger the extent of which even they could not gauge.

III. THE DOWNFALL OF THE OLD RÉGIME.

In the early days of 1920, this junta realised that the situation had become extremely critical. The prisons were beginning to fill with those convicted by military courts-martial of being in possession of arms or seditious documents, or detained by order of the Chief Secretary as being suspects. Following on the murders of policemen during fair days, steps were taken in certain districts to prohibit markets and fairs being held. Sir John Taylor sought out ancient files and resurrected the post of Divisional Commissioner, an office which was intended to co-ordinate the working of military and police, to enable important decisions to be taken locally, and to give a wider survey of the general situation than the County Inspector of Police was in a position to take. It was an office the success or failure of which depended on the personality of the man. The most famous example in former years was General Redvers Buller in the "eighties," who, by his strict impartiality, tact, and humanity brought peace to the kingdom of Kerry. The renewal of the experiment was by no means a success, although it lasted down to the time of the disbandment of the R.I.C. The County Inspectors of the R.I.C., who received some of the appointments, were probably the most successful, because they

possessed an intimate knowledge of the country. The retired generals and others who received the appointments as the result of friendship in high quarters or by reason of political services were often found to be more trouble than they were worth; in one case at least the airing of political views in opposition to those of the Government led to a forced resignation. But we have wandered away from the early days of 1920.

To cope with the increase in crime, a change was made in the status of Sir John Taylor himself by the direction of the Lord Lieutenant. Hitherto, though matters relating to crime had been dealt with mainly by him, technically he was responsible to the Under-Secretary, who could intervene at any moment in any particular case or in policy generally. Mr MacMahon had, however, already been ignored or snubbed by the Chief Secretary even in administrative matters; now a further step was to be taken. Sir John Taylor was given plenary authority to deal with all matters relating to police, prisons, and crime without reference to the Under-Secretary. He was at the same time relieved of other duties, so that his energies might be concentrated on those more important matters. The ordinary official procedure was reversed. Normally the Assistant

Under-Secretary is left to deal with office matters generally, while the Under-Secretary of State handles the larger questions of policy and is in the confidence of Ministers. It looked as though the deposition were only a short way off, and a regent already appointed who would be the future king.

One of the first steps after the change was to bring up from the country a Resident Magistrate, Mr Alan Bell, for the purpose of a more critical sifting of the documents which were being seized in larger quantities, some of them being in the nature of secret orders of Sinn Fein. What this was intended to achieve was never made clear. In all probability it was hoped that a judicial mind brought to bear on these documents would be able to indicate what form a successful charge should take. The function was a half-way house between the rôle of policeman and that of Attorney-General. Others imagined that Mr Bell was to be a kind of Court of Star Chamber, to hear cases *in camera*, and by a merciless cross-examination akin to the Inquisition wrest a confession of guilt from the lips of the accused. In any case, whatever Mr Bell achieved during his short time in Dublin Castle could not have been of the slightest danger to the innermost counsels of the Sinn Fein organisation. But the fact that he was engaged in the detection of crime was sufficient. After little more than a month he

was dragged from a tram in the public street and brutally done to death—one of those first daylight murders which must stand for ever as blots on the fame of a historic city. The work which he began was left unfinished, for other methods were soon to be adopted.

Simultaneously steps were taken to intensify enrolment for the Royal Irish Constabulary in England, Ireland as a recruiting ground having dried up owing to the terrorism which was being exercised against recruits. Purchases of additional motor transport were, at the Viceroy's personal instance, hurried forward, and the defensive paraphernalia of war—steel shutters for police barracks, Very lights, wireless apparatus—began to loom largely in the Budget of the Police Vote. In these directions the foundations were laid in the days of Sir John Taylor, and on them were built up the immense developments of the following twelve months—developments too large for a police force, too small for an army.

All these activities had at any rate one result—namely, a considerable increase in the number of prisoners, though evidence was ever as difficult to get, and detective work was too crude to be able to bridge the deficiency.

The increase in the number of prisoners, many of them untried and possibly some of them innocent, led to a renewal of

that species of prison revolt to which woman had, in the days of Asquith, pointed the way—namely, hunger-striking. Its main object was to secure special ameliorations for certain classes of cases, for there is even an aristocracy of crime! Irish prisoners have always fought for their rights, and England unfortunately has never been sufficiently judicious to endeavour to appreciate these niceties. Consequently, in the matter of prison regulations, from the days of agrarian troubles, she has over and over again had to admit defeat and remodel the rules of clothing, of food, and of segregation. Now in the spring of 1920 strange consequences were to result.

A hunger-strike was on foot at Mountjoy and Belfast Prisons. Its object was not to render government impossible—that stage was to come later—but to wring from Government a political prison status for Sinn Féin. All sorts and conditions of persons had joined in it; all kinds of outside pressure were being employed to shake the determination of the Viceroy and Chief Secretary; but their adviser, Sir John Taylor, was adamant. He deemed that the slightest sign of weakness meant disaster, and he had every hope that, as before, the Government would win either by a physical breakdown, which would render it necessary for the Prison Medical Officer to advise the temporary removal of the pris-

oners to an outside hospital, or by the collapse of the prisoners' own determination. It is very doubtful whether he regarded this occurrence as being of any vital importance to the Government's policy, and in consequence to his own position. Matters were taking their normal course, although the numbers involved and the prolongation of the fasting were both exceptional.

This hunger-strike weapon was a stock one in the armoury of Sinn Féin. The organisation had its professional fasters who underwent training, and were given medical advice as to the mode of life to be followed in prison so as to ensure the best results. There is little doubt that their friends from time to time supplied them with meat-essence tablets, and again it is beyond question that often the water they drank contained albumen without the prisoner detecting it. But most tragic of all, it seems certain that many of those who underwent this awful ordeal did so through the fear that if they failed and returned home, the merciless gunman would end their life in a swifter and more horrible way.

The Under-Secretary, Mr MacMahon, was in London. Rumour said that he was endeavouring to move the Cabinet to give way, but that his efforts were in vain, as that body had left the decision entirely with the Chief Secretary. Then either he or his friends, for the most part those deep in the

counsels of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, tried new tactics. The Viceroy, than whom a more kindly-hearted soldier did not live, was appealed to in the name of humanity and of the love he bore to Ireland. Doubtless it appeared to him that an act, such as it was in his power to perform, would be regarded throughout the country as one of generosity, not of weakness, and that the Irish people, by one of those strange waves of feeling which have at times possessed them, would see in him a leader to guide them by less perilous paths into the Promised Land of Self-Government. Without consulting Sir John Taylor, he gave his orders for the release of the hunger-strikers. It is

evident that he did not realise the varying status of the prisoners, for the release included not only the untried but also a small minority of convicted men.

This act took away the breath of many people, not only in official circles but outside; but to Sir John Taylor it came as a staggering blow. He saw in it a sign of his waning supremacy, though he still pictured himself as resuming the normal functions of an Assistant Under-Secretary. He asked for and obtained a month's leave of absence, and the Under-Secretary took in his hands the reins which he had hitherto been content to leave to his colleague on the box.

IV. THE COMING OF THE ENGLISH.

The short interregnum between Sir John Taylor and Sir John Anderson gives an opportunity for studying the character of the Right Hon. James MacMahon, who was in theory senior to both, but never chose to assert his power save by indirect and spasmodic means. Ulster born, he has the intense Roman Catholic dislike of the typical Ulster spirit, although he is as proud of his Ulster birth as any Orangeman. (Conversely, nothing so much annoys the Orangeman as to suggest that he is not an Irishman.) One can understand how alien the Belfast spirit is to him, for his ideal life is the social world

of Dublin, its golf-greens, its race-courses, its luncheons at the Shelbourne. Easy-going, yet when there is work to be done he is not one to spare himself—as, for instance, when, after the rebellion of 1916, as Accountant and then as Secretary of the Dublin General Post Office, he had to reconstruct destroyed records and reorganise a system. As an official, apt and quick in decision, the beau-ideal of a chief with whom to work. As the head of a great English Department, he would have been admirably sympathetic and courteous to all, not one to worry over details; but placed as he was in Ireland,

and dominated to a great extent by close friendship with the priesthood, he was unable to grapple with the pettiness and wire-pulling that beset many Irish officials, and which renders the office of Chief Secretary a nightmare to English politicians. He was often too palpably on the popular side to be regarded as impartial, but the bitter distrust which the ordinary Ulsterman felt for him was unjustified. The balance was not truly adjusted, but it is wrong to allege that it was intentionally weighted. He was a Nationalist throughout, and for that reason over and over again refused any title or dignity. He accepted appointment as a Privy Councillor only after great pressure, and owing to the exigencies of the post of Under-Secretary, which renders it almost essential that the holder shall be available for signing documents as a member of the Privy Council.

It was he who tided over the transitional period in the spring of 1920. The release of the hunger-strikers was the signal for a change in the Government's Irish policy. What connection there was between the two is difficult to trace. It is possible that a change was, in any event, imminent, and that the Viceroy's action only precipitated it. Early in April, Mr Macpherson went to the Ministry of Pensions, and Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Overseas Trade, succeeded him. The character of Sir

Hamar will be discussed later. For the moment he remained quiescent, presumably feeling his feet, making his bargain with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and selecting his staff or having it selected for him, for the latter is a Civil Service art which keeps Ministers from running amok and upsetting Departmental tradition overmuch. Whoever was consulted, however, one person certainly was not, and that was the Under-Secretary.

The pivotal office of the Government's policy in Ireland, though always damned under the title "Dublin Castle," has shifted from time to time, according as Chief Secretaries felt inclined to vary their window-dressing business. When crime was being repressed or social functions the rage, the Chief Secretary's office, with its permanent head, the Under-Secretary, was the office *par excellence*. When housing, health, and relief were the watchwords, the Vice-President of the Local Government Board held the stage. When tuberculosis and open windows became the ramp of a Vicereine, the Registrar-General of Marriages and their consequences seemed likely to be the head of some vast new Department. At one time the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, despite its name, set the official tone. Sir Antony MacDonnell, when Under-Secretary, realised this changing phenomenon, and fearing the danger to the *amour-propre*

of an Anglo-Indian bureaucrat, devised the plan of co-ordinating all Departments with the Chief Secretary's Office, so that on whatever quarter the beam fell the Under-Secretary would catch the reflected glory, but he failed. Now it seemed likely that the same office which, under Sir John Taylor, had been almost represented by a single man, was to have "Resurgam" written over its portals. The *avant-couriers* of reorganisation appeared shortly after Sir Hamar had made his début in Dublin—not on an outside car as braggart rumour said, but in an armoured motor driven at high speed.

Of one member of this vanguard it is unnecessary to speak, as seemingly Ireland had no attractions for him, and he was not seen again. The second was Mr A. W. Cope, and in the twinkling of an eye he had settled the office reorganisation, even those portions of it which he had not seen, much less grasped. They came, they saw, and then they disappeared as promptly as they came, leaving not a wrack behind. And men wondered whether things were to resume the old course, and gossip was busy with the name of a possible new Assistant Under-Secretary. So matters went on till the eve of Whitsuntide, when a mysterious new visitor appeared in the shape of Sir John Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue. Official rumour now reached its climacteric, but he was re-

garded merely as some bird of passage come to gain impressions in order that the great ones of the Treasury might, from their eyry at Westminster, solve the difficult problem of Irish administration and Irish politics by some formula evolved from the collected wisdom (gleaned in a few week-ends) of a Secretary of the Treasury, an Inland Revenue Chief, and an Assistant-Secretary of the Ministry of Pensions.

An official *communiqué* announced what Departmental circles alone recognised as a complete break with normal traditions. Sir John Anderson was to be Joint Under-Secretary with Mr MacMahon, and also to have the powers of a Secretary of the Treasury. The post of Assistant Under-Secretary was to be filled by Mr Cope, and Sir Hamar Greenwood's private secretary was to be an Irishman from the Inland Revenue. From this notice Sir John Taylor learnt for the first time that he was retired (a touch strangely reminiscent of other incidents of the Lloyd-George régime). The board was cleared, some new game was afoot, and the pieces had been skilfully placed for the opening moves.

The reasoning which underlay the Government's action is even now obscure, but appears to have developed along the following lines. They desired peace, and they hoped to obtain it by placing in power officials who had no axe to grind, no stake in the

country, whose future careers did not lie in Ireland, and who therefore could afford to act independently. Sinn Fein distrusted politicians. It was hoped that the olive branch when held out by a civil servant would prove less of a scarecrow than when the visage of a Chief Secretary smirked above it. The right hand made this benevolent gesture; the left hand was, not in the pocket of neighbour Ireland, but in the act of drawing forth a well-filled purse. The power of the Treasury given to Sir John Anderson was not intended to be used in a niggardly spirit. The open hand of war-time expenditure, whose rare and refreshing fruit had not yet been tasted in Ireland, was to be tried in a new direction. To prevent any misunderstanding, a new branch of the Treasury was opened in Dublin. It sat where the Treasury Remembrancer had sat before, but its functions differed. Previously the office was merely an outpost of the Treasury, *propugnaculum imperii*, whose main function was to keep its parent office posted in all the official and political intrigue which underlay most of the proposals in Ireland for spending public money. Now it was to become for almost all purposes a microcosm in itself.

This was the first line of attack. The second was the personality of the new Assistant Under-Secretary: he was to be the maid-of-all-work, to be

flung into the breach when the opportunity offered, and in the waiting-time he would be employed in toning up Irish Departments, most of which certainly needed it.

Next, the religious factor had to be considered. Mr MacMahon must remain undisturbed, for to translate him elsewhere would have been bad propaganda. A suitable sprinkling of Roman Catholic private secretaries would give promise of a more plentiful growth to come.

Thus much on the side of benevolence; but the British Government must make it clear that this benevolence was not weakness, and that if this fine gesture failed in its effect, stern repression must follow. General Macready was withdrawn from his post of Commissioner of the London Police and made General Officer Commanding the Troops in Ireland. Another field officer, Major-General Tudor, was appointed Chief of the Police Forces in Ireland. The former was intended to give a civilian flavour to the military, the latter to militarise the police.

It is not to be imagined that the British Cabinet or the Chief Secretary worked out the marshalling of these forces so clearly as is set out above, for that would presume a settled policy and an intelligent anticipation of events, but it was in this fashion that appointments pieced themselves together and made the pattern which a backward glance can now clearly distinguish.

V. THE JUNTA.

The outstanding figure in the new régime was the Under-Secretary, Sir John Anderson. He did not, and as a civil servant necessarily could not, pose in the limelight to the same extent as his respected chief, but any one behind the scenes knew where the brain power lay. A signal example of the successful civil servant, he brought with him the experience of a variety of posts. It has for many years been the practice for Cabinet Ministers to be handed on from one post to another, striding like Colossi from place to place, seeking like Alexander new worlds to conquer, even though the one they have left behind may be lying in a sorry and half-finished state. In the last seven years the practice has extended to the Civil Service, a practice more justified in its case than in the case of ministerial offices, if judged by results. Sir John Anderson is one of the most striking examples. He is about forty-five years of age, and yet this graduate of Edinburgh University, after serving apprenticeship in the Colonial Office, has been in turn Secretary of the National Insurance Commission, of the Ministry of Shipping, of the Local Government Board, and of the Ministry of Health, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and now Secretary of State to the

Home Department. What posts remain for him to fill in the concluding twenty years of his official life it is difficult to guess, but that ambition will drive him to aim higher is certain.

Deep-set inscrutable eyes, barely visible while in thought, formed a mask to the whole countenance. Open, they looked at you with something of reserve, something of humour, touching up the impassiveness of the long dark face. In official life his manner had the touch of greatness in it—easy, gracious, but with something of condescension, as of one born to rule. Deliberate, yet swift in judgment, without superfluity, grasping the pith of the matter in a moment, he disclosed that remarkable versatility which enabled him to hold his own with men who had made a life-study of what he had first heard of but yesterday. What he lacked in knowledge of detail, he made up partly by intuition, partly by bluff, for he was sensitive to being in the wrong, or appearing uninformed. For this reason he was an adept in covering up his tracks if he made a false start or set out on a wrong trail, but he scorned the littleness that would make a scapegoat of a subordinate to save his own face.

"He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene."

He did not err in the way that

Sir John Taylor erred—namely, in over-great attention to detail. Like a true general he pointed out the offensive, he laid down the main principles, and left the rest to his subordinates, while he planned out the next move either to counter failure or develop success.

He had a mind of very great grasp and reach. Doubtless this was one reason for his selection for the post, for the Government knew that the cumbersome machinery of the Government of Ireland Act would need a deft organiser to set each several part in motion. Astonishment holds the mind how it ever came even partially to life at all, and we have all become Galileos and cry aloud, "*E pur si muove!*"

He was a master of the English style. In these days of slipshod writing, an official letter drafted by the hand of Sir John Anderson could be set up as a model of clarity and terseness: without the jejune-ness that marks the classic examples of red-tape, without the complexity that makes Treasury circulars anathema to those who possess some remnants of right thinking.

No civil servant has ever wielded, or is ever again likely to wield, such power as he did during his twenty-one months of tenure of office as Under-Secretary, yet he kept an un-biassed mind throughout. Inevitably it rendered him somewhat autocratic, not towards his inferiors, but towards his superiors or his equals in rank.

He could yield but in his own way and at his own time. By sheer domination of character he could ruthlessly brush aside proposals or objections raised in high quarters. The power placed in his hands he wielded judiciously, though one might criticise his proneness to bargain. He would at times yield in a small point against his better judgment in order to gain a greater. In Civil Service and Treasury matters this is a dangerous practice. For judgment of a case on its merits it substitutes a haphazard decision that may not cause injustice, but ultimately is bound to prejudice some later case. *Reculer pour mieux sauter* may be a sound policy in war or diplomacy, but it is a manoeuvre that should not enter into the canons of the Civil Service.

The new Assistant Under-Secretary, Mr A. W. Cope, was a strange personality. A detective by his training in the Customs and by instinct, he seemed at first sight a curious choice for the post. But he was a man who revelled in work, who was never happier than when he held a dozen threads in his hand, and in the tangled web of Irish politics there were threads enough and to spare. Quick and impetuous in movement, the body revealed the mind, a fiery soul working out its way. A lean face, a large mouth, a ponderous jaw, hard eyes, and a capacious brow—at first glance there seemed

something cruel and fierce, until a mischievous smile lit up his face, a ready laugh would ring out, and a gleam come across the eyes. It was somewhat of a revelation: work had crusted over the exterior, but there was something gentle within. He hated airs of self-assumption, he hated intolerance, he breathed the spirit of a fighting democracy. His career in Ireland was a long struggle against militarism, which sought to impose itself more and more on the life of the country. He endeavoured by every means to keep that spirit out of the police, for militarism in a police force is a far more potential danger than in a disciplined army.

His besetting sin was his desire personally to do the work not only of a whole office but of the police and the prisons' organisation, while simultaneously busying himself with wider issues of policy. As a result, the work in some directions was bound to suffer. His driving power was immense, but it dispersed itself in too many directions, and had a further disadvantage in that it weakened the sense of responsibility in subordinates. He never felt confidence that his orders would be carried out. Had he been less self-reliant, he would have won quicker sympathy. Yet those who knew him best say that he craved for sympathy, that he felt deeply the isolation in which he lived. Not that he was a recluse: his boyish temper

could enter with zest into a hard set of rackets, or a game of *vingt-et-un* with high stakes, and he took an immense delight in a stage-like rehearsal of the swearing-in of the new Viceroy, in which as Clerk of the Council he played a leading rôle. These, however, were little oases in a life too devoted to work which he would often prolong through the whole night. How his physical frame and his brain stood the strain it is impossible to conceive. It was not ambition that drove him on, but restlessness. In his eyes there was no difficulty that could not be surmounted. A folding of the hands before an obstacle was to him the highest sin. Obstructive tactics galvanised him into a veritable rage of activity. He had no respect for age or experience as such, if their views ran counter to his own. On occasions such as these his tone would become overbearing, his choice of language something not often heard in the passionless calm of Government offices. During such outbreaks there was only one course to be adopted, and that was not to use the soft answer that turneth away wrath, but to reply as aggressively as he. He bore no ill-will, he would apologise frankly, and turn his attention to the next comer.

Besides these two, there were only two other officials who could be regarded as in the inner secrets of Government policy. One was the Law Adviser, Mr Wylie, now a

Judge of the High Court ; and the second was Mr Mark Sturgis, who acted as a personal assistant to Sir John Anderson. The former obtained the post of Law Adviser under the régime of Sir John Taylor. The Attorney and Solicitor-General found their Parliamentary duties so pressing as to render it impossible for them to spend sufficient time in Dublin. The gossip of the House of Commons and the freedom of Piccadilly were preferable to incarceration in the Castle, or police patrols outside their residences. Mr Wylie had, however, then confined himself to law, now he was consulted in regard to policy. He superseded Sir Henry Wynne, the Chief Crown Solicitor, in this respect. Though a Presbyterian and an Ulsterman, he disliked the Northern characteristics. He was Liberal in his views, opposed to a policy of repression, although desirous to uphold the sanctity of the law. The spirit of compromise was abroad at this juncture, and it was desirable that the law should wink at some things, or, at any rate, that it should be liberally interpreted. As there are various ways in which counsel can put forward a case, so there are varying aspects from which the legal mind can view a certain set of circumstances. Because what seems to the layman the direct method is not the one adopted by a lawyer, is no evidence that the lawyer's view is dishonest. No counsel with

the splendid practice which a man of Mr Wylie's youthful years had built up could be other than honest in principles, and courageous in stating them. Though he was known to the public to hold moderate views, that did not any whit lessen the risk he ran from fanatical gunmen. When appearing on behalf of the police at the inquest on the murdered Mayor of Cork, he stood fearlessly in a court where a score of men had revolvers in their pockets waiting to shoot, and where women spat in his face. He never asked for police protection. His passion for hunting was perhaps his safeguard, and when he could steal a day from his professional work he was to be found out with the Meath Hounds at a time when any other man in his position would have as soon thought of hunting with the hounds of hell. When the olive-branch was plainly proved to be an unsuccessful lure, and court-martial under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations largely superseded civil courts, the need for his advice had passed, and virtue found its reward in a timely - vacant Judgeship.

One passes by an easy transition from the Law Adviser to the fourth of the officials who counted—namely, Mr Mark Sturgis, whose love of horses and hunting was of the cement of a close bond of friendship with the learned counsel. Mr Sturgis is one of those officials whose Christian name is in-

separable from his surname. There appears to be something gallant and gay in such juxtaposition. It lends itself to an easy familiarity, to an atmosphere of camaraderie. It smacks of jovial nights when a surname is stiff and a Christian name makes all the difference between a function and a carouse. It is therefore apt that his godfathers and godmothers did for him in his baptism call him plain Mark, for without it he could never have been himself. And when one has a wife bearing a title in her own right, the setting is complete,—the touch of aristocracy has rounded off the whole.

Mark passed for a Special Commissioner of Income Tax. Doubtless the fact that he had been one of Mr Asquith's private secretaries had something to do with this appointment, but who could have refused it if Mark had set his heart upon it? Finding that the signing of deductions of super-tax from war profiteers had become somewhat boring, he was on the look-out for something more in his line, and his chance came after Sir John Anderson had been a few weeks in office. It is true that Ireland could not yet be regarded in the light of a foreign country, and therefore entitled to a representative of the Foreign Office in her capital. It is also true that Mr Mark Sturgis could not be strictly regarded as belonging to the *corps diplomatique*; but was not diplomacy needed at this juncture in Ireland, and

did not Mr Sturgis possess all the essential qualifications of an attaché—aristocratic birth, an easy and graceful manner, a distinguished taste in clothes, a complete lack of knowledge of the traditions of the country to which he was to be accredited? At least he knew the language of the greater part of the natives, though he spoke it with something of a foreign intonation. Sir John Anderson had at the Inland Revenue already fallen a victim to his charming personality, and now that he desired some one to carry on his policy during his own frequent absences in London, who could better fill the rôle? The Government, too, desired that some effort should be made to win over the intellectuals of the movement. An Irishman has the instinct to appreciate a gentleman, even though his ideals differ, and it seemed likely that Mr Sturgis might be able, by his affable manner, to gain contact with them. His humorous and somewhat cynical outlook on society might carry him far, and a deft and patient temper might achieve success. Beneath his somewhat fantastic and casual manner there was a fund of common-sense, and the Asquith tradition was still something to conjure with in Ireland.

He abhorred red-tape and office routine. He took no serious interest in the everyday and often complicated questions that arise in any large Department. He trusted im-

plicity on these points to his subordinates. He could talk well, and it was difficult to associate him with the typical civil servant. He had ideas, but he lacked concentration and driving power. It was not, however, for the last-named qualifications that he was selected. As an understudy of Sir John Anderson he was effective in handling officials and the military, but as a diplomatic force he failed

because, try as he might, he could not come to grips with the real forces behind Sinn Féin. They may have regarded him as a dilettante without any real backing, one not to be taken seriously. He lent a cachet to the administration, he supplied an atmosphere which Dublin Castle had lacked for many years, and those who breathed it were thankful for the little air of freshness that blew about those dull walls.

VI. THE LAST OF THE CHIEF SECRETARIES AND THE LAST OF THE VICEROYS.

It is now high time to turn to the Chief Secretary himself, but purposely the sketch of this last of the Chief Secretaries has been deferred until those of his subordinates have been dealt with. What Sir Hamar Greenwood did was done by the permanent officials; for what he said he alone was mainly responsible.

He embodies the maxim of Tacitus — "*Omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset*," — at any rate, so far as the outward appearance went, for, as regards his mental equipment, little was known of it until he appeared on the horizon as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

His port was imposing, his attire reproachless. He loved to hear the fine colonial roll of his own voice. He affected the democratic manner, calling all comers by their surname *sans phrase* after the most

casual introduction. He was not discourteous, but many of those whom he consulted would have preferred a more dignified manner. Unbending is no doubt graceful in its time and place, but there is a mean, and those of the old school always knew where the line should be drawn. His familiar introductory exclamation to his private secretary, "My God, Hemming," and so forth, with a good Canadian twang, lent itself blatantly to imitation. In appearance he recalls Sir Plume—

"With earnest eyes and round unthinking face."

He had a certain native shrewdness which served him in good stead when cornered, but no one could regard his intellect as brilliant, or his conversation as sparkling. His manner in the House of Commons was impressive, and conveyed

an appearance of simplicity and straightforwardness. This appearance was not really deceptive, for he was a man of one idea at a time. More than that confused him and made him lose his bearings. This was particularly noticeable in his replies to supplementary questions in the House of Commons. In dealing with figures he usually lost himself completely unless he kept to his book, and where he attempted himself to edit replies he usually missed the main point. Given, however, a straightforward debate on facts that were thoroughly familiar to him, he was fluent and often persuasive. Where he could not persuade others he persuaded himself, and he went gallantly forward into regions that bordered on the mysterious, and into statements that smacked of the fantastic. His downright manner gave confidence at the outset to those who desired a strong policy: they forgot that no politician is master in his own house, and that self-advertisement must always be a ruling power with those whose life is too often a pose.

The only policy that he clearly understood was propaganda, and he was prepared to pay largely to experts in that line. He was aided and abetted by members, not only of his own party, but of the other side, who accused him of suppressing facts. He therefore, as Mr T. P. O'Connor

once said with fine oratorical effect in the House, plumped for "publicity and more publicity and still more publicity." A staff of ten carried out his intentions, and supplied the Irish and English Press with what the Chief Secretary desired they should know. The police themselves were treated to propaganda, and a special officer edited a special newspaper for their benefit. It was supposed to hearten them up, but could only have appealed to the intellect of a Black and Tan. Its sentiments were cheap and clap-trap. In addition to official *communiqués*, the value of which must always be measured rather by what they omit than by what they disclose, he inspired articles in periodicals, and used all those arts and devices which five years of militarism had left and still leave as a taint upon a free Press.

Though there was an Assistant Under-Secretary ready to retrieve any situation, an Under-Secretary of a dominating personality, a Chief Secretary standing for ever in the limelight, yet after all there was a Viceroy, a distinguished general, a very gallant gentleman. Power had gone from his hands, and he was kept in ignorance of most things that were happening. Yet like a true knight he would not turn from his post. It is beyond question that it was only his sense of duty that kept Lord French to his unenviable task. His Council of Ireland, which he

had set up in the days of Sir John Taylor, in the hope that a representative body of moderate opinion might stem the tide of revolt, had long since fallen into abeyance. Of society in Dublin there was none. Those who had residences in England had left for safer shores; those who had none did not care to expose themselves to the risk attendant on a stay at the Viceregal Lodge. An occasional journey to London, a visit to the fields of Flanders—these were all the breaks in the humdrum Dublin life of one of the great generals of modern days. He faithfully carried out those matters of official routine which fall to the lot of the King's representative in Ireland. He exercised the strictest economy in his official staff, seeking neither to hedge himself with outworn

dignities of office nor to retain an entourage which he knew that his needs no longer required. Those who were about him found in him a true gentleman, whose every thought was not of himself but to lighten the day's work for others. It is not the picture of a fallen monarch. It is the picture of one who had lived through the early days of a terrible war, on whom those darkest days of Europe had left an ineffaceable mark impressed by a vast responsibility. What was this new age compared to that? what were these petty politics beside that vast cataclysm? True, for a little space he had had the ardent enthusiasm of one who might be the guide to lead Ireland to a better way, but that had passed and left behind the sense of the vanity of man's desires.

VII. THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NEW RÉGIME.

Hardly had Sir John Anderson entered on office before Sinn Féin determined to show that it was in no mood for pourparlers. On a single day in the summer of 1920 hundreds of police barracks, vacated in order to concentrate forces, and of Petty Sessions courthouses, went up in flames. It was a display of organisation on a large scale which brought home for the first time the wide spread of disaffection and the secrecy that shrouded its movements. A

week or so later it was again repeated, coastguard stations being included in the holocaust. No one need imagine that this was the result of a mere spirit of destruction. There were signs that if the overtures of the new régime did not bear the expected fruit, there would be an intensive movement to strengthen the power of the Crown forces, involving the reoccupation of barracks and the concentration of forces in every available public building. To destroy these certainly

meant hampering military plans, besides interfering very considerably with the administration of British law. Sinn Fein had the power of selecting its own point of attack; and while the British Government was repairing losses in one direction and readjusting plans, Sinn Fein, with its thorough knowledge of the country, could attack from a new quarter.

It was not a hopeful beginning, but the reorganisation of the police had not yet taken full effect. For the latter purpose a complete new administrative staff was brought from England with Major-General Tudor at its head. Shortly after his arrival the anomalous position of the Inspector-General of the R.I.C. under the altered state of things was solved by pensioning him off and leaving his post unfilled. This gave General Tudor complete freedom of action, and, unlike former heads of the force, he was not fettered by financial restrictions save for occasional pin-pricks. He brought military ideas, certainly a very essential need, to bear on the problem of police offensive and defence. He concentrated police in strategic positions. Hitherto barracks had been vacated merely because they were dangerous to a small garrison; now he reopened barracks in dangerous localities and strengthened the occupying forces. He re-armed the police with modern rifles, he issued Lewis guns and bombs. Above all, he per-

fecting the motor transport. No money was spared for the next twelve months in making the police a mobile force independent of railways. Where previously police had often to borrow transport from the military, now the position was reversed. Ford vans were abolished as death-traps; Lancia lorries and Crossley tenders, which gave more freedom of movement, were substituted. As months went on and ambushes of motor-cars became more pronounced, a bullet-resisting armour of light weight was evolved by Thornycroft's and other English armament firms, and the majority of lorries were fitted with this defence, while a wire cage on top acted as a bomb-catcher.

General Tudor certainly left no stone unturned in increasing mobility and effectiveness. At the same time, new recruiting stations for the R.I.C. were opened at Liverpool and Glasgow, and, aided by the slump in unemployment, as many ex-Service men as were required were forthcoming for enlistment in the R.I.C. This spurt in recruiting, the steady stream of new blood that made itself felt in lonely outposts, did much to rehabilitate the *moral* of the R.I.C., which had become temporarily lowered owing to the long strain of what was tantamount to a state of siege. The General himself paid frequent visits through the country in all directions, signalling out and promoting those men who had shown zeal and in-

initiative in the defence of barracks.

This was satisfactory so far as it went, but to prolong a state of guerilla warfare among a people who knew every inch of the soil where they were operating was not likely to be fruitful of real results. An intelligence system was needed which might enable the fomenters of dissension or the perpetrators of daylight murder to be discovered. As already stated, the existing system was very defective, consisting as it did of three separately controlled branches—the Dublin Metropolitan Police Detective Department, which was practically exterminated, the Royal Irish Constabulary Crime Branch, whose methods were crude in the extreme, the Dublin Military District and the General Headquarters Intelligence Branches, which were moderately efficient. The first two were now co-ordinated by General Tudor, and a more up-to-date Intelligence system inaugurated under the general supervision of his Chief of Staff, Colonel Winter. But a hiatus still remained; the gap between the police and Military Intelligence Staffs was not bridged, and this stultified much of the work.

Lack of co-ordination between police and military was to a great extent the cause of failure, not only in the domain of intelligence work, but also in regard to policing the country generally. General Macready and General Tudor might

personally be desirous of co-operating, but the two machines worked in different ways. The police method was decentralised, leaving much to local judgment and initiative. The military system does not lend itself to this: it moves slowly, guerilla warfare it is ill able to cope with. The military view, therefore, inclined to large sweeping operations extending over a wide zone, to be thoroughly and ruthlessly carried out. General Tudor himself, as a soldier, might be in favour of these tactics, but he had to remember that his was primarily police, not military duty. There was a third factor involved, and that was the policy of the civil administration, which was attempting to inveigle Sinn Féin into negotiations, and had also to bear in mind that a policy of thoroughness inevitably brought suffering not only on the guilty, but also on the innocent. Journalists and politicians never make allowances for difficulties of this character. They cry aloud for the stern hand of repression, and when it is put forth but a little and inevitably damages some chance passer-by, they rush into abuse of violent methods. The Assistant Under-Secretary was left the thankless task of attempting to hold the balance even between the two methods. He was, perhaps, over-ready to check any tendency towards the strong arm, but it was useful to the military to be reminded that civil administration was still

the basic law of the land, and that, for instance, prisoners could not be left indefinitely in prison without trial. Whenever matters became too strained, either as between military and police or as between both and the Assistant Under-Secretary, the diplomatic handling of Sir John Anderson was most effective in smoothing over difficulties, and in enunciating some line of policy that might reconcile the views of all.

One of the most difficult problems to be settled in the autumn of 1920 was that of Republican Courts, which were now functioning widely. Here the Law Adviser found a *via media*. So long as they posed merely as arbitration courts, they were to be regarded as legal if somewhat irregular, similar in nature to industrial courts. If, however, they arrogated to themselves powers of fine or imprisonment they were to be suppressed, but even here latitude was allowed so far as fines went. He, too, was the originator of the regulations which defined the varying prison treatment of prisoners convicted of criminal crimes, of those convicted of political offences, of those interned as suspects. Those with ameliorations were put in prisons distinct from those without, so as to avoid the odium of mutual comparisons which had given rise to wreckage and hunger-strikes in past years. This careful segregation worked successfully, though the ameliorations made escape easier to

those who came under this classification.

Thus far there was in existence a new civil administration, a new police administration, and now was added as a counterpart to these a new code of law. It is strange that any one should imagine that a law by itself can be effective. There are only two things that can make it so: one is brute force, the other public opinion. The British Government did not propose to adopt the former, the Irish people did not propose to create the latter. Fear cannot breed public opinion, but it can compel acquiescence, and here the gunmen had a more powerful ally than the British Government with its more civilised methods. But Sir John Anderson, the Chief Secretary, and the Cabinet pinned their faith on the law, so two Acts found their way into an already overcumbered Statute Book—the Criminal Injuries Act, 1920, and the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act. Ye may tell them by their fruits: the gathering was but thorns and thistles. The strangest phenomenon of all was perhaps the passing of these coercive measures through their various stages *pari passu* with that panacea of all ills, the Government of Ireland Act.

The Criminal Injuries Act of 1919 had hoped to solve the Irish problem by touching the ratepayer's pocket slightly. The 1920 Acts hoped to attain this consummation by a more potent charm. The

Government was given authority to stop all public grants to County Councils and other local authorities who were not carrying out their statutory functions, and to apply all such moneys to the payment of the statutory liabilities of the authorities. These unmet liabilities were in the main the payment of decrees for malicious injuries which the newly-elected County Councils had in June ceased paying. There were also countless other necessary services financed by County Councils, for the greater part in connection with the maintenance of law—upkeep of court-houses, revision of jurors' lists, sheriffs' salaries, and the like. One of the most ardent apostles of the new doctrine embodied in the Act was Sir Henry Robinson, the Vice-President of the Local Government Board. It was he who mainly talked Sir John Anderson into the belief that the extension of the policy of the previous Act would starve the County Councils into submission, and compel them to recognise the Imperial Government and not Dail Eireann. He was infatuated with the child of his own creation. He had been chiefly responsible for putting the Local Government Act of 1898 into operation, and he believed that all power in Ireland rested in the hands of the County Councils, and that what they thought to-day Ireland would think to-morrow. He lived in a period which left out of cal-

culatation the spirit engendered by the Rebellion of 1916. He thought in terms of rates, of grants-in-aid and Exchequer subsidies, while his opponents were thinking of revolvers and Irish Republican bonds. He seems to have over-estimated the volume of Government assistance to the Councils, and forgotten that a good deal of the expenditure was permissive, and that with a falling income retrenchment would solve much of the financial trouble. This miscalculation might have been remedied if another clause of the Act had been operative—that one which allowed distraint of rates in settlement of claims: it was easy to see that this last clause was drafted either by absentee Law Officers out of touch with the real situation in Ireland, or by some cynic of the school of Mr Birrell.

The remaining clauses of these Acts were intended to do away with the increasing danger of trying by ordinary civil courts those cases which had a political complexion. Military courts were substituted, and the opportunities of blackguarding police and military at coroners' inquests were removed by substituting Military Courts of Inquiry. These changes were very necessary, and on the whole tended to the improvement of justice. The officers of the courts in important cases were not only regimental officers, but lawyers of high standing invested for the nonce with military powers

and uniforms. Where minor offences were involved, the proceedings may at times have been of a perfunctory character, but where important issues were at stake the Court was perhaps at times even too anxious to do justice to the accused. It will be accounted to Sir Hamar Greenwood for righteousness that in the House of Commons he

never swerved for a moment from a whole-hearted support of these courts. In a civil community military action may be too overbearing, too oblivious of the human factor, too alien in spirit to the everyday life; but military authority clothed in the robe of law takes from its dress something of majesty, and a full savour of justice and honesty.

VIII. MURDER MOST FOUL.

The foregoing activities should have resulted in some show of improvement if they were really moving in the right direction. The daily bills of mortality, however, proved otherwise, even though a lull would come for a time. It recalled the German submarine campaign. For a week, perhaps, the sinkings would almost cease; then from one or other part of the seven seas a new tale of blood-lust would come, and people would know that the breathing-space was only because the chase was momentarily too hot, or because the unseen foe had temporarily departed to replenish his armoury. So it was with Sinn Fein. Through the summer and autumn of 1920 there was a gradual and more intensive movement. Its activities spread to localities that had been peaceful before. Sir John Anderson and the other arrivals from England, who had at first lived in the spaciousness of the Marine Hotel at

Kingstown, were warned that their goings and comings were being shadowed. To live near the line of retreat to England was an advantage, but one preferred to retreat alive rather than dead. Discretion is the better part of valour, and My Lords were well advised to prefer the narrow but well-guarded precincts of Dublin Castle to the promenade of Kingstown Pier.

The Government had not, however, lost all hope as yet of winning over the intellectuals of Sinn Fein. Mr Sturgis was still to be seen in the public streets, at race-meetings, or lunching in company with the Under-Secretary, Mr Mac-Mahon, or with theorists who were held to be on the fringe of republican counsels, either because they knew some politically-inclined prelate or because they frequented some artistic set in Dublin. Hangers-on of revolutionary societies usually know as much as the hangers-on of ducal houses or

kingly courts. That is to say, they will tell you what light-o'-love left by a secret door at a time when honest folk are all abed, or what wine my lord duke drank ere he retired; but they know nothing of what he said to his counsellor or what message he received from his liege-lord. To use a more modern phrase, these were not the men who could deliver the goods.

Towards the close of the year 1920 the campaign of murder began to quicken still more. The streets of Dublin became the scene of butchery. The Irish character in relation to the taking of life is callous in the extreme. Some of Synge's plays brought out this trait in all its nakedness, and people exclaimed at their unreality. The years 1919 to 1922 have proved to the hilt that Synge knew exactly what he was talking of, and this fact lends a new interest to Synge's drama. For, though the language of Synge's peasants may be removed from actuality, their feelings and their outlook on life are exactly reproduced from their originals.

To contend that every member of the Crown forces killed in Ireland in the past three years was murdered is straining the meaning of the term. Applied to those deeds in the streets of Dublin, where half a dozen assassins surrounded and pistolled one defenceless man, emptying their revolvers into him as he lay dying on the

ground, it acquires its true and horrible significance. But it is misapplied in those more open actions where attacker took equal risks with attacked, ambushes where a temporary lapse of alertness enmeshed an armed police or military party in a concentrated volume of fire. The attacker did not wear uniform, and could in a moment turn himself into a peaceful citizen; this fact gave him an unfair advantage, but at least his opponent had a possible chance. Those taking part in this guerilla warfare, however, never knew when to stop. There was a complete lack of the sporting instinct which refrains from carrying warfare further than the immediate object—namely, the putting of a man out of action. The savagery which led to the mutilation of the ambushed cadets at Macroom was possibly the outcome of men seeing red and being temporarily irresponsible for their actions, but it shows what a slight veneer of civilisation covers man's primitive passions.

The spread of crime in the South was beginning to alarm the British Government, but owing to their commitments abroad it was not possible to spare any more troops for Ireland. One solution, however, offered itself. Ulster viewed with growing distrust these happenings in the South. She judged that her future now lay in a different direction from that of the rest of Ireland. She disliked the necessity of

constant appeal to a Dublin Castle whom she regarded as coquetting with the forces of disorder, and by constant political pressure she succeeded, in August of 1920, in obtaining a separate Assistant Under-Secretary for Belfast. Ulster had hoped that he would be independent with the right of direct appeal to London, but in practice she found that the partition of Ireland had not yet sufficiently advanced to enable these hopes to be realised. With police and military controlled from Dublin, the independence of Ulster was not to be achieved. However, she saw one way out, a way which in its spirit showed a realisation of citizenship sadly lacking in the rest of Ireland. She undertook, in view of the need of police and military elsewhere in Ireland, to raise a sufficient police force of her own, the Special Constabulary, for service in Ulster—a small force to be paid and act as ordinary police, a larger to receive only a small retaining fee, operating locally mainly by means of night patrols, who were engaged by day in their ordinary avocations. On these forces much abuse has been heaped by Nationalists and Sinn Feiners alike, and it is true that the lack of discipline occasionally led to abuses. But from the point of view of the Imperial Government, Ulster's action was such as should only have earned respect and gratitude, coming as it did at a time when the growing campaign of murder in the south rendered it

necessary to despatch thither as large a number as possible of Crown forces. Sinn Fein has remembered this, and its bitterness against the northern area is based not only on its desire for a unified Ireland, but also on its anger at Ulster's action at this period.

The growing concentration on cold-blooded murder in Southern Ireland appeared to indicate that there was a fear among the intelligence staff of Sinn Fein that the net was beginning to draw too close. The bolder methods of offence of the Black and Tans, unrestrained by years of police education, the fine dare-devil work of the Auxiliaries in carrying out house-searches in the very centre of the web of intrigue were beginning to have effect. Mobility was increasing every day, and there were signs of a more effective secret agency at work. Sinn Fein was making desperate efforts to shake off the growing incubus, and on 14th November 1920 it achieved what it may have regarded as its master-stroke, but what no honest Irishman can ever think of but with a sense of shame and disgust. About 9 o'clock on a Sunday morning, when the streets were filled with those returning from mass—the symbol of a Christ who gave his life to save the souls of men—some dozen houses in the best residential parts of Dublin were entered by bodies of armed men, and there were murdered, many before the eyes of their wives, fourteen

men, most of them military officers, others auxiliaries, one or two apparently in error. Any one who was in the streets of Dublin that day can never forget the feeling of intense expectancy that brooded everywhere, as though people were waiting for the Destroying Angel to strike once in his wrath, and Dublin would be one with the ruins of Nineveh and Tyre. The mills of God grind slowly, and though no outward sign has yet appeared, it may be that the wheel has not yet gone full circle.

A month later the Chief

Secretary was boasting in the House of Commons that he had murder by the throat. It is possible that the horror of November had shaken some of the supporters of Sinn Féin in the belief of the righteousness of their cause. Amongst the police forces, too, now stiffened by the leaven of Englishmen, there was a feeling of optimism that the murderers were on the run. The harbour-mouth lay ahead, the pilot's foot was on the ladder, but the call of the ocean was too loud; the helmsman turned the ship again to the open sea.

IX. A DAY IN THE CASTLE.

The first six months of the year 1921 saw Ireland converted into a cross between a medieval Italian city, where hired bravoës lurked at street corners to stab a foe in the dark, and a more modern Balkan State, where brutalised soldier-peasants made whole countrysides reek with atrocities. Before entering into a discussion of the final phase, a glance at Dublin Castle itself during this period may disclose a somewhat lighter scene.

Owing to the murders of November military officers had now been ordered to live in barracks, while those more closely connected with the defence of the Dublin District were quartered in the Castle. Increased numbers of English civil servants had taken up their quarters there, and the

rapidly-growing Intelligence Staff of the Chief of Police also sought cover. The premises were indeed becoming almost uncomfortably crowded, despite the fact that five or six buildings adjoining the Castle precincts, which had been taken over mainly to secure the immunity of the Castle from attack, served the secondary purpose of providing additional residential accommodation. Fortunately, when it was seen how matters were going, Mr Cope—a bachelor himself—had issued orders that no more wives were to be given quarters. Those who had been sufficiently fortunate to get in before the rush were allowed to remain, and the Upper Castle Yard, for the first time for many years, echoed with the laughter of

children—the painting of one of them may be found in Sir Nevile Wilkinson's book, 'Titania's Palace'—a strange gleam of light across a dark and stormy scene.

It is 10 o'clock in the morning. The Irish-born civil servant is entering the Castle precincts from his home outside. The English-born, some of them likely to be more in the limelight in the drama of Sinn Fein, are safely housed within. On duty at the Lower Castle Yard gate are Dublin Metropolitan and Military Police, and just inside lounge a couple of Auxiliaries ready for emergencies. Bomb-catching meshwork is stretched across the archway, and a drapery of barbed wire festoons the passage ways in front of the guardroom. Twenty yards outside the Castle gate a man-trap is open, giving access to the subterranean river Poddle that runs beneath the Castle walls. A couple of Royal Engineers are below seeing that the wire entanglements across the stream have not been tampered with during the night.

In the Lower Castle Yard are standing, not champing steeds waiting to ride forth for a canter in the Phoenix Park under the supervision of the riding-master—a sinecure post that still provides a house and £30 a year—but an array of three motor lorries or Lancia cars. With cheerful shout, bandying about nickname and jest, a platoon of Auxiliaries, their revolvers holstered on

their thighs, a few Winchester repeaters amongst them, are preparing to set out on some house-to-house search in the city or suburbs,—quick, alert, vigilant, trained on the fields of genuine war to prompt decision and leadership of men. With hoot of horn and jaunty flutter of flags on the motor bonnet, they set out. It has all the glamour of war, but war is the symbol of broken hearts and broken lives.

Over the summit of the old Castle Keep, where the Union Jack floats, peeps the cap of a watching sentry, and machine-guns are ensconced behind its parapet, a post of vantage which commands the Castle approaches, and gives a view over distant streets and house-tops. So six hundred years before from the same tower did an English sentry, armed with musketoon or arquebus, look forth on the river Liffey tumbling to the sea, and outside the city walls, which circled but a few hundred yards away, saw the green fields and pasture-land rolling away to the Dublin hills, where lurked the O'Byrnes and other war-like clans. A strange land of unquiet—

"Where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never
comes
That comes to all."

Passing under the archway that pierces a block of buildings the Upper Castle Yard is entered. Who is this so lightly tripping, so debonair, his breast a blaze of ribbons won with

the gunners in France and other fields? It is Colonel Winter, the Chief of Intelligence. That his only training is war, that he lacks any first-hand knowledge of Secret Service methods, is irrelevant. He is a brave man, and one cannot cope with a secret society that holds life cheap without a stout heart. At first sight one would imagine him the typical colonel of light comedy—slight and small, dapper, delicate of speech, eyeglass set in eye. He is one whom men would follow even to the cannon's mouth; perhaps not the best man for his present job, but hard-working, earnest, and just.

On the point of leaving his office and stepping into an armoured Rolls-Royce on a tour of inspection in the country is General Tudor, noted for his excellent staff work in France at a critical juncture in the spring of 1918. He has a difficult part to play, hedged in on one side by powerful civil servants, on the other by a military Commander-in-Chief. He has to pacify local jealousies and to contend with a conservatism in the old R.I.C., which dislikes change, and has scarcely adapted itself to meet conditions for which it was never recruited or trained. Brought up as a soldier, he asks for efficiency, and at the risk of being unpopular he throws aside those who do not reach that mark. Quiet and unpretentious in manner, he has an evident dislike for the

somewhat overbearing methods of the Assistant Under-Secretary, and prefers the sweet reasonableness of Sir John. He is occasionally prone to forget that he commands a police force, and that what may be a peccadillo in a soldier is a crime in a policeman, whose *raison d'être* is to keep the peace. Like most Englishmen who have attained high place, his forte is that of an organiser and an administrator—a man who under the Empire would have made his mark as proconsul of a Roman frontier State.

In the centre of the courtyard, talking to Sir John Anderson, his next-door neighbour in the Castle quadrangle, is Major-General Boyd of the Dublin District, an officer who, having failed to pass the examination for Sandhurst, entered the Army through the ranks, and is one of the few British generals to hold simultaneously both the D.C.M. and the D.S.O. An Irishman born, he handles the difficult Dublin District admirably, and is a *persona grata* not only with his own officers, but with the police forces. He has youth on his side, and a ready word for soldier and constable whom he may come across. In the most dangerous period there was not a race-meeting that he would miss, and perhaps this trait may have given him immunity from attack.

Mark Sturgis, fresh from an early canter in the Phoenix Park, in his buttonhole a red

rose picked in the Viceregal gardens, looks out of place in this dingy square. Hyde Park on a summer's morning seems more in keeping with the atmosphere he creates, the general effect often aided by a nicely-cut pair of riding-breeches not discarded even for the official day. The children of the Castle (who appear to lead an Arcadian existence, without lessons, without governesses) divide their attentions between him and the policeman on duty at the door leading to the Chief Secretary's office. If the children of Ireland had the power of guiding her destinies, Mark would long ago have won them—and with them Ireland—over to a Never-Never Land of dreams.

Then comes the more solid figure of Sir Henry Wynne, who has snatched a few hours' rest after toiling till midnight. One longs for the day when the Castle gates will open and he can walk forth again as a free man, when he can lay aside his pen for a while and seek the congenial society of his clubmates, his old friends of the Bar and the Bench. Here he is isolated; for his unswerving Unionist faith is out of touch with the political agnosticism of these English free-lances.

Towards noon the scene changes. Some important court-martial case is taking place in the City Hall, one of the buildings commandeered outside the Castle gates. An armoured turret car appears in the Castle

yard, and from it step a couple of court-martial officers with attaché-case in hand and ancient waterproof coats on back to preserve their gloss from the oily interior of their steely conveyance, so carefully these high judicial functionaries must be kept from harm. The witnesses for the defence are arriving just at the same time, and look in wonder on their surroundings—country-folk for the most part, with perhaps the parish priest to give his testimony to the good character of the accused. Had they been an hour earlier they might have seen a score of Sinn Fein prisoners exercising in the Castle Yard, men who had been rounded up in some raid the previous night, and were now housed in the Castle for a few hours until arrangements could be made for their transfer to an internment camp—some with lowering brows, type of that understratum that every revolutionary movement brings to the light; some with the wild and exalted air of the fanatic; a few just quiet-looking, good-tempered, country boys whose only fault, perhaps, was a spirit of adventure.

Strange passengers are they all, gathered together in a wild medley for the space of a few hours. They pass and others come—a procession that ever shifts—politicians, soldiers, policemen, pure adventurers, high-souled patriots, callous murderers, dreamers, and visionaries, those who make and those who mar, scaremongers and

peace-seekers, for the walls of Dublin Castle enclose from day to day the forces which are battling for Ireland from Cape Clear to Torr Head.

Men cannot live cooped up in these walls from week to week without some outdoor recreation. No one desires to be murdered for the sake of a game of golf, or butchered on the football field. Behind the old Viceregal apartments there is a pleasant walled-in garden where three tennis-courts have been laid out, and as the summer comes on the Metropolitan Police Band plays in the late afternoon. But this spot is reserved for the more select, though a game can be snatched there at lunch hour by even the lesser lights. The Board of Works, however, is equal to the occasion, and the hard surface of the Upper Castle Yard, when well rolled and sanded, lends itself to adaptation as a tennis-court. It has the advantage, too, that it is playable even in the early spring. So in the afternoon, while the civil servant toils on, he may refresh his eyes with the figures of the Intelligence Staff culling a few busy moments from their idle hours by means of a hard single or four; while the wife of the Chief Commissioner, pining for her garden, with patient hand plants a few nasturtium seeds on stony ground, in the hope that, climbing up the wire netting that surrounds the court, they may bring forth sixty-fold, and make

a sunshine in this shady place.

Dublin Castle would never have reached its place in history without the society of ladies; and the Chief of Police, or, more possibly, his immediate assistants, did not propose to neglect this tradition. Wives were tabooed, save those rare ones who already claimed the right of possession; but the modern machinery of Government Departments provided an undeniable right to a quota of typists. The 'Daily Mail' may allege that the measure of the importance of a Government Department is the number of its charwomen. By that standard the office of the Chief of Police would have been an insignificant place. The true criterion is the number of its typists and women clerks, and by this test General Tudor's office assumes its rightful place. The ordinary Irish typist was held to be suspect, and accordingly the recruiting-ground was England, where the pressure of economy was gradually resulting in numbers being at length discarded. An attractive salary, a spice of adventure, were sufficient inducements to attract numbers of workless ladies in the same way as they had attracted numbers of unemployed men. "Tudor's typists" became the rage, and the sight of large numbers in summery attire, more suited perhaps for tea at the Shelbourne or the Bonne Bouche than for office routine, trooping to the balcony when anything novel appeared

in the Castle Yard, lent a new flavour of romance to the scene.

But Curfew restrictions rendered it impossible for these ladies to take any large part in what was now becoming a Castle institution, the periodical dance in St Patrick's Hall. Their physical safety also must be thought of, for Sinn Fein was on the watch. A new building had been commandeered outside the Lower Castle Gate. Why should not a selected few be housed there? Not luxurious apartments certainly, and the addition of a few bathrooms was a *sine qua non*; but a Board of Works can perform wonders in a short time, and a housekeeper will do the rest. There was an added advantage, that a few wives who had been unable to find accommodation with their husbands in the Castle precincts could be enrolled as typists. The pay was not that drawn by an Under-Secretary or a colonel, but it was at least sufficient to meet dress bills in London when a brief holiday came, and the office work could adapt itself to the exigencies of the intellect.

The hostel was floated, the selected few obtained places, and at night-time there issued from St Patrick's Hall the strains of a military or police band, while perspiring sub-

alterns, interned civil servants, and preserved Intelligence officers were wafted about by wives or daughters of the Castle garrison, disguised typists, or the few outsiders who braved the terrors of Curfew. When some change was desired, it was afforded by *thés dansants*, which enabled the remnants of Dublin society to invade the Castle precincts in the afternoon and while away the official hours by jazz or fox-trot, something far remote from the card-indexing of the movements of Michael Collins or Dick Mulcahy, but equally elusive and unexpected.

Some may carp at these recreations of Dublin Castle as being misplaced amidst the turmoil of revolution. Be it remembered, however, that for most of the inhabitants there was little chance of recreation outside, save at the risk of a bullet or bomb, and to be cooped up in the Castle squares for weeks on end was trying not only to health but to *moral*. There was another reason, too—namely, that at least nine-tenths of those in charge of the destinies of the country were not Irishmen but Englishmen, and were not likely to take so seriously to heart the sins and the sorrows of an island whose traditions were not theirs.

X. THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1921.

This history has now come to the early days of 1921. With the opening of the New

Year certain administrative changes of some importance had occurred which appeared

to be in the nature of a bargain. The south-western portion of Ireland was definitely placed under military control—that is to say, the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order here rested not primarily on the civil but on the military power. The Chief Secretary still remained answerable to Parliament for its condition, but the ultimate source of his knowledge was not, as elsewhere, the Chief of Police, but the Military Headquarters Staff. It had become absolutely essential to place power in the hands of the military; for the whole of this area was infested with roving bands of armed men, acting on preconcerted plans, although the means of carrying out such plans was left largely to local initiative. It was the military who issued injunctions to the County Court Judges forbidding them to entertain claims for compensation awards where the destruction was done, or alleged to have been done, by Crown forces. It was they who made the possession of firearms an offence punishable by death, who issued orders to the police regarding the restriction of motor permits, who suppressed newspapers and stopped fairs. Even before this they had, under the powers conferred by D.O.R.A., done some of these things; but then they were only acting at the express wish of the civil power—now they thought and acted for themselves.

The military in turn made a

concession to the police. Mention has been made of the inadequacy of the intelligence system of both police and military. Now the military agreed to turn over to the Chief of Police the Dublin District Intelligence Branch, which was really the pivot on which in Ireland the whole War Office system of secret information turned. This action might have been prolific of success if revolution had remained a mere undercurrent, but by this time it was coming more and more into the open and developing into real warfare. More decided steps were taken now that there appeared to be little chance of persuasion effecting anything. Moneys which it was known were being used for financing propaganda, or for more violent methods, were seized in banks; but the amount was comparatively small, for the finance of the I.R.A. was on a strictly cash basis, and the most harmless accounts may have been utilised for weekly drawings. A complete system of control of banking issues might have served to disclose something, but this would have disorganised the whole trade of the country, and the time was not considered ripe for such drastic action. The civil Government would not even go so far as to carry to its logical conclusion the stoppage of Government grants. Illegal collectors were allowed to gather in rates for County Councils which defied the Local Govern-

ment Board, and it was known that these rates were partially intended as a levy in support of the I.R.A. The policy of "thorough" was at no time enforced. The civil Government always stopped short of action which in the eyes of the world might label Ireland as a hostile country and England as engaged in a war of reconquest.

Sir John Anderson doubtless knew the line of policy which the Cabinet wished him to pursue. The Chief Secretary had become an absentee, and the situation, which shifted daily and hourly, could only be known to the man who had his finger all the time on the pulse. Sir John had become the most powerful force in the British administration in Ireland. It was impossible for either police or military to take a new move without first consulting him, and inevitably he was driven to act on his own initiative and judgment. His weekly visits to London certainly kept him informed of the trend of opinion in political circles there, but these visits were mainly with the object of securing the approval of the Chief Secretary and the Cabinet to a line of policy laid down by himself. Power leads to autocracy, and the Chief Secretary, who lacked imagination, must perforce accept the dictum of the stronger intellect and will. The policy at this period seems to have been briefly as follows:—

Firstly, an insistence on the

essential unity of Ireland. This originated partly in Sir John's own Liberal views, which entailed a dislike of the Ulster attitude, partly in a desire to retain some potential concession with which to bargain with Sinn Féin.

Secondly, the crushing of any overt act of hostility by all the forces of the police and military.

Thirdly, non-interference with the various forms of boycott that were rife—boycott of courts, of Unionists, of Belfast or British goods. In a sentence, acquiescence in any form of nationalism, so long as not accompanied by personal violence. The British Government appeared to think that the situation could still be mended by the ordinary methods of *rapprochement*, and that it was a question merely of jockeying for position.

Who was to make the first overture? One member of the junta might hold that the British Government could still without loss of prestige make a *beau geste*, an offer of Dominion Home Rule, or some other panacea. Another might believe that this would weaken bargaining power. So matters dragged on. In these deliberations Mr Cope took no part. His rôle at the moment was the difficult one of holding in check police and military, for the struggle was beginning to enter on its bitterest phase, and reprisal was now becoming a weapon in the armoury of both sides.

During the period when there was so little to hearten the Castle in its struggle with active hostility or widespread inertia, it could at least count on one victory. Hunger-striking, which in the days of Sir John Taylor had been employed in order to win special treatment for political prisoners, was now being utilised with the object of rendering imprisonment impossible. Sir John Anderson, however, had made up his mind, and the Chief Secretary and the British Cabinet were immovable. Once and for all this threat must be conquered. Much cheap sentiment has been expended on the martyrdom of those who either of their own volition or by orders from their organisation chose this kind of self-immolation. Looked at in the cold light of reason, there was no valid argument now for the British Government giving way. Judged by results, their attitude was eminently sound. Sinn Fein had at length to admit defeat, and called off the hunger-strike. As a weapon of revolutionaries it is now blunted for all time, and Sir John Taylor, from his retreat in England, could contemplate with satisfaction the outcome of a line of action which nine months before he had so strenuously advocated without success.

What in the meantime was happening to the ordinary civil administration of the country? Control of local government in the South by the Local Government Board had virtually

ceased. The story is told of an official who eked out a day by a prolonged luncheon hour. At noon he set forth to a second-hand book-shop on the quays. There for an hour he picked up the threads of some volume that he had laid down the previous day, and read on to the pleasant gurgle of the Liffey running past. An hour for lunch, an hour in the precincts of the College Park watching the early stages of a cricket match. Thus time glided pleasantly by. The Land Commission work which was beneficial to the tenant was not hampered to any great extent, and tenant purchasers, fearing to break their tenure, paid their annuity with regularity, even in the most disturbed counties. Only when attempts were made to set apart holdings for ex-soldiers was opposition met. One inspector received from an unknown hand a sketch of grim humour: it represented the laying-out of a holding, neatly divided up into fields—three fields,—one for the inspector and each of his assistants, and each field the shape of a coffin.

The Department of Agriculture, by a very liberal interpretation of what compliance with rules and regulations meant, carried on in so far as the state of the country allowed it to do so. Its Councils had always been noted for their democratic flavour, and this now stood them in good stead. *Dail Eireann* was pleased to grant official recog-

dition to it and to the Congested Districts Board. The British Government's money was never refused when it could be had almost unconditionally for the asking.

Apart from the inconvenience to trade and the public of having its mails seized and telegraph-wires cut, the General Post Office still functioned, although the I.R.A. courier service superseded it for the more secret mails of the organisation. Police and military too had ceased to use a public service which had for long been suspect, and in lieu regular convoys of armed motors set out daily from Dublin Castle to different parts of the country with despatches. Aeroplanes were frequently used by the military in the counties of Cork and Kerry and between Dublin and Belfast, while every day a naval courier bore all the Government mails between London and Dublin.

It was especially in the domain of law that British power had faded away. True, the courts were, for the most part, kept open, the Resident Magistrate sat at Petty Sessions, the Sheriff saw that the courthouse was in order; but apart from the claims of police and their dependants and of loyalists for malicious injury and damage to person and property, the courts might as well have not been there. The Sinn Féin adherents only attended courts of law in order to make allegations against Crown forces and establish some claim to compensation for loss of their

property. The Judges went on Assize and received the farce of white gloves, the symbol that there were no criminal cases to be heard. Any criminals that could be apprehended were tried by military courts, and, for all the real use they were, the Judges might have stayed at home. One cannot but admire them, as undoubtedly they did run a certain risk, despite heavy police and military guards. The town-folk probably looked upon them for the most part as braces of amiable gentlemen engaged in the harmless pastime of flogging a dead horse, and received the cue from headquarters not to interfere. The police and military regarded them as a passing evil which temporarily and unnecessarily disarranged the local distribution of forces, taking them from their proper functions.

The question of the risk run by various categories of persons in Ireland during this period is one which deserves mention. The main object of Republican attack was the police force, because through its local knowledge that force was in the best position to lay its finger on the danger spots. Any one suspected of trying to find out too much was either quietly warned to clear out, or dealt with in more summary and brutal fashion. Those who controlled policy or who were thought to possess that power were not safe. It was desirable not to be too outspoken in public, for some time or other it was bound to be had in evidence against

the speaker. The test to which each citizen was put in Sinn Fein's crucible appears to have been—was he, or was he not engaged in tracking down disaffection? Those not so engaged were left alone. The civil servant remained untouched though his master was an alien Government, for his activities were either necessary and helpful to Sinn Fein, as, for example, the postal service, or were harmless and futile, as, for example, the Local Government Board and the Inland Revenue. Judges and Resident Magistrates, once criminal jurisdiction was handed over to the Military Courts, could travel about freely, their only risk being the trenches everywhere cut across roads which broke the axles of unwary motors. Yet, one Resident Magistrate was murdered, another had to leave the country, but in the latter case the real reason was because he had used his revolver in self-defence. Another spent several unpleasant days in a damp and dirty cow-byre, kidnapped to prevent him attending a court, and the same happened to more than one Crown Solicitor after the truce. These, however, were exceptions. A hearty fearless manner often went far in minimising risk, and this, amongst police officers especially, had much to do in keeping large areas practically free from violence. Tact, an absence of vindictiveness, and moderation of speech and action, were qualities which bore their fruit, even in this winter of discontent.

Boastful and bullying tactics were taken note of, and it was on those who adopted them that the blows fell most severely.

There were two outstanding features of this last phase of the war in Ireland. The first was the testing by Sinn Fein in British Courts of Law of the legality of certain powers arrogated to themselves by the military, either by prescriptive right as warring against the King's enemies, or by virtue of the powers conferred by the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations. It may seem strange that Sinn Fein, which scouted British Courts, should itself make use of them, not directly, it is true, but by means of its agents. But important actions on questions of constitutional law carried from the Irish High Court to the Court of Appeal, and finally to the House of Lords, focussed the attention of large numbers of people outside the British Isles on Sinn Fein's two claims: one, that Ireland was a country ground down under a military dictatorship; the other, that the disturbances were the legitimate warfare of a people who had already proclaimed themselves a republic. There were other aspects of the same question—for instance, Had the military the right to override the ordinary Civil Court procedure, whether Civil Courts had any jurisdiction at all, what constituted a state of rebellion and so justified military action? Sinn Fein was not consistent in its arguments. They varied

according to the set of circumstances, and it is evident that the object was twofold—one propaganda, the second the desire to hamper military action which, the more drastic it became, the more dangerous it grew to the leaders of guerilla warfare. The constitutional position was by no means satisfactorily cleared up, but the arguments will form a happy hunting-ground in years to come for exponents of constitutional law. Sinn Féin did not embark upon these *causes célèbres* from a desire to save the lives of those condemned to death by Military Courts over whose bodies the legal fight was waged, even though the resultant delay did in some cases have this effect; human life, even that of its own adherents, counted for little in the working out of its plans.

The second outstanding feature was the policy of reprisals. This will be dealt with in the next chapter, but before doing so it will not be out of place to note the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the struggle.

The retention of Mr MacMahon as Under-Secretary was largely prompted by the desire to have some one in close touch with that Church. It is certain that he utilised his friendship with Cardinal Logue as a lever to induce the Church to make a pronouncement on the subject of resistance to the constituted authority. He failed. The Hierarchy, who for many reasons feared a Republican

movement, which must eventually loosen their power over the will of the Irish people, were undecided how far that power had already passed from them. The younger priests, bred in the spirit of the Rebellion of 1916, openly supported the revolutionary movement. The rise in the cost of living and the consequent need of obtaining increased monetary support from the faithful rendered the priesthood less independent of popular opinion. The Hierarchy, therefore, were uncertain both of the clergy and their flock. As has often happened in the history of Europe, not only among the Roman Catholic, but in the Protestant Churches, it was felt necessary to temporise. The teaching of the Old and the New Testament was interpreted in relation to current events, and not in relation to the eternal laws of truth and justice and morality, whose foundations are fixed, and change not for all time. The Roman Catholic Church wavered. If it had proclaimed its faith with no uncertain voice, it might have lost prestige for a time, but its position would have been strengthened for future generations. It chose to sit upon the fence, and now the people have found that they can advance without its help. In consequence, the Roman Catholic Church as a political force in Ireland is dead, and it remains to be seen whether its moral lead has not also been gravely shaken.

XI. THE PERIOD OF REPRISALS.

The last six months of the warfare in Ireland is a scroll written over with lamentation and woe. Many innocent people, rich and poor, suffered by reason of the doctrine of reprisals, which both sides adopted as a settled policy.

There were official reprisals and unofficial reprisals on the part of the forces of the Crown. The earliest known and, comparatively speaking, harmless reprisals were in the year 1920, one in Mallow by the military, and one in Thurles by the police, both actuated by the desire to smash something after the murder of comrades-in-arms. The outbreak took the form in the one case of breaking windows and looting; in the other of firing indiscriminately in the streets and at houses. In neither case were lives lost, and in neither was any attempt made by the Government to disguise the facts. In the Thurles case compensation was actually promised by Government, but before payment was made sinister happenings on a larger scale had taken place, and it was considered undesirable to create a precedent.

By the autumn of 1920 the numbers of English ex-Service-men in the police, the so-called "Black and Tans," had brought different ideals into the force. The main characteristics were a dislike of underhand methods, a strong

sense of comradeship, a certain laxity of discipline, and an indifference as to the material welfare of Ireland. A considerable number of the younger members of the R.I.C. felt something akin in these Englishmen to those whom they had met in all quarters of the globe during the Great War. The older members of the force did not find their companionship altogether congenial, but recognised their good fighting qualities. A special training camp was opened for them at a disused aerodrome at Gormans-town, some twenty-five miles north of Dublin, their training being rather on military than police lines. Their rough-and-ready methods soon showed themselves. A couple of policemen passing through the town of Balbriggan, about eight miles away, were murdered. Several armed lorries soon after appeared in the town, and swift retribution followed, a portion of a hosiery factory and a number of houses being burnt. A publican was also found murdered, and a considerable part of the population temporarily deserted the town. No attempt was made to conceal the originators of these early acts of destruction, though the civilian murders remained not proven, and the Chief Secretary pleaded in the House of Commons for a police force temporarily infuriated and out of hand owing to

the callous murder of their comrades.

As the days went on, however, and the number of such burnings increased in volume, the policy of the Chief Secretary altered. *In vino veritas*, but Sir Hamar was a teetotaler. The police had in their reports never confessed to being authors of such acts. The anti-Sinn-Fein party, which appeared to enjoy a very nebulous existence, was with perfect safety often suggested as being the perpetrator of the outrages, or a note was appended to the report of a murder stating that mysterious fires had broken out in the vicinity shortly afterwards, and that the police were pursuing active inquiries. Sir Hamar took the cue, and gallantly stuck to his guns through thick and thin. It is undeniable that in many cases some mystery did attach, but in others no reasonable man could doubt.

Of these mysterious burnings, always following close on murder of police or military, Thurles and Mallow (a second outbreak in each town), Cork, Tuam, Ennistymon, Miltown Malbay, and Tobercurry were classic examples, and a very large number of isolated creameries also went up in flames. In regard to the last named, the Chief Secretary practically confessed that Crown forces were the cause. The reason is not far to seek. Any one who has seen the stream of country carts congregating at these buildings for the delivery

of milk in the forenoon can imagine what an easy channel of communication is afforded for the hatching of plans and the despatch of messages. The police knew this, but the only remedy that lay ready to hand was the unauthorised one which they adopted.

The passage from the Jedwood justice of the unofficial to the more calculated campaign of the official reprisal was easy. The military authorities were the originators of the latter, and in fact it did not exist outside the military area in the West and Southwest. Where an ambush took place, and it seemed to the local commander that the inhabitants must either have been active participators in or at any rate connived at the action, an example was made by selecting a few houses in the locality which, after due notice to the inhabitants to clear out, were set on fire. The actual total of houses so destroyed was comparatively small, but the destruction gave rise to considerable outcry, and in the end a half-promise was given by the Chief Secretary that the practice would cease. The unfortunate farmer in many of the country districts, who only desired to live peaceably with police, soldiers, and his own neighbours, found himself in a dilemma. If he were to give warning of an ambush that he saw being prepared, he would either have to leave the country and live on charity in England, or stay at home

and be murdered a few days later as a spy. He chose that alternative, which at least made it possible that it would not be his house but his neighbour's that the military would select to burn. The system, too, was faulty for another reason, in that it afforded a pretext for burning the houses of suspects, even at a distance from an ambush, though there was no evidence to connect them with the immediate crime.

The military, again, overlooked that this policy of theirs only reacted on the unfortunate loyalists in the South and West. The farmer and the labourer loved the cottages where they had been reared, and where their children and grandchildren had perhaps been born. The members of the I.R.A. had the same sentiment ingrained, and they determined that if the poor who were their kith and kin suffered in this way, so would the wealthier, who were traditional supporters of the other side. They had no particular grudge against these people, but they hoped that it might cause their enemies to cry halt. Hence the destruction throughout May and June of great country-houses and historic mansions with priceless treasures of art and family heirlooms. The material loss of these houses need not be overrated. Many of them had been closed for years, their owners having alternative seats in England. Others were inhabited only in a few rooms,

the proprietors being too impoverished to keep the rest open. The loss of these white elephants must have come as a veritable relief to many, for whereas their upkeep had been a constant drain on income, their loss at any rate gave a chance of handling compensation money.

The destruction of property by way of reprisal is, however, a bagatelle compared with the taking away of life, and life became cheaper and cheaper in those days. Some of the murders were undoubtedly the acts of the English police recruits, for others the Auxiliaries must accept responsibility. In their ranks there were men trained in a dangerous school, whom years of war had not chastened but brutalised. In France discipline had been stern, and any attempt at lynch-law or plunder met with swift punishment. Here in Ireland all men seemed to have combined in setting law at naught, and discipline in small groups of men living in the midst of a hostile population might at times become lax. Some of the crimes seemed to have retaliation as their basis, others theft; but a number appeared utterly meaningless, and can only have originated in a disordered brain maddened either with drink or fear.

Set against these sporadic crimes, the crimes of the revolutionaries and their underworld of satellites bulk gigantic. Something may have been due to the tools with which the

latter at times worked—the submerged population to be found in cities and towns of Ireland, not always so remarkable for their morality as some would have us believe. Yet, callousness was inherent in the policy itself—perhaps in the whole Irish race, whether it lives north or south of the Boyne. Ex-soldiers were dragged from their homes and shot by some lonely bog-hole; in Dublin hotels Auxiliaries were murdered before the faces of their wives; a District Inspector of Police was captured, and after a form of trial hung in a barn “for having borne arms against his country.” His last few lines to his wife come like a whip-lash across the face of any Irishman. At least one young girl and one young wife met their end because their murderers could not miss the opportunity of shooting at the police or military officer accompanying them. Private vengeance, domestic or agrarian, seized on the state of things as a cloak to wreak its will on the defenceless.

The growing horror of these murders impelled the British Government to strive to the utmost to find some party in Ireland which would call a halt. But Ireland need not imagine that because a halt did come she is absolved from the consequences of her misdeeds. She will suffer, and perhaps is even now entering

through the portals of pain. There may be sunlight beyond, but of her own will she has shut it out for years to come, when it might have been hers by waiting a few hours for the dawn to rise. “No man can set a bound to the march of a nation,” said Parnell; but, like the children of Israel, a nation may rebel and its march become a wandering for forty years in the wilderness.

The soul of a nation may be a valuable asset, but the soul of an individual is an immortal being. In Ireland to-day there are walking through her fields and streets murderers—not men who risked their lives in a fair fight, but men who callously stabbed and shot the innocent, the weak, and the defenceless. No one will ever bring them to the bar of justice. No one wishes to hear the shame of Ireland dragged into the light of day with all its sordid details. Not all the water in the sea shall wash out that stain. One day they will appear before a Judgment throne, where it will be in vain for them to plead that they do not recognise the court, and where there are no jurymen for counsel to challenge. The case will be conducted in a language that all can understand, and the motives of men’s hearts will be laid bare. Some may pass the test, but of others it shall be written as a just God may decide.

XII. THE PARLEY.

The history of the negotiations which led up to the truce between the Sinn Féin party and the British Government is likely to remain concealed for a space of years. But there is no doubt that but for the Assistant Under-Secretary, Mr Cope, they would never have come to fruition.

In April 1921 the Viceroy, Lord French, had made way for Viscount FitzAlan of Derwent. The last months of the world-famous Field-Marshal in Ireland were lonelier than ever before. He saw Ireland rapidly approaching anarchy, a condition of things for which he had no responsibility. His Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar, almost an absentee from the country, forgot his existence. Yet this superseded head of the Irish Administration was loyal as a sword-blade to the advisers who neither imparted nor sought advice. When Sir Hamar was being badly heckled day after day in the House of Commons, Lord French only sought some means of showing his innate loyalty to those who surrounded him, and when receiving the freedom of the city of Belfast went out of his way to speak vigorously on behalf of the blundering Chief Secretary. His last action before quitting Ireland was pathetic. He had bought for himself an estate in Roscommon, hoping that it would be possible for him to spend the

evening of his life there. Disorders in Ireland now rendered this impossible, but before he left, unknown save to a few, he spent a couple of days in the house that possibly he might not visit again. Nothing in his official life became him like the leaving of it—he merely said good-bye one afternoon to a few of his more intimate friends, and the next morning, with only a little ceremonial on Kingstown Pier, he was gone.

His successor, Lord FitzAlan of Derwent, arrived in a new rôle. He was still the King's representative, but only with the limited powers given under the Government of Ireland Act. Those powers were strictly circumscribed, and in fact it was very doubtful whether the Chief Secretary, an English Minister, had any official relation to him at all. His real relations were with the Ministers of Southern and Northern Ireland, none of whom as yet existed.

Something, however, had to be done to justify the existence of the Act on the Statute Book, more particularly as the Ulster Unionist Party, who formerly looked askance at the Act, now pressed for it to be brought into operation. They desired that the Northern Parliament might be a *fait accompli*, so that its abrogation might not be offered as a bribe by the British Government in its ne-

gotiations with Sinn Fein. In June 1921, therefore, that Parliament was opened by His Majesty the King, who, in his speech, expressed the hope that something might be done to bring peace to Ireland. It was not long after this that the unexpected happened, and a truce was signed which brought open hostilities to an end.

As has been said, Mr Cope's activities mainly contributed to this result. At what stage he had taken the bit between his teeth and set out on his own course it is difficult to know, but certainly he had been very active for several months. He appears to have made up his mind that the diplomatic methods of Sir John Anderson and Mr Sturgis were useless, and that the end could only be obtained by direct and personal contact with the men who mattered. He certainly kept the other two informed of the progress of events, and no doubt they and the Chief Secretary saw no harm in a subordinate entering on such a hazardous course, provided that his failure did not involve them in any way. It is very doubtful whether they ever really imagined that success would attend his efforts.

It is customary in certain circles in Ireland to regard Mr Cope as a sort of monstrosity, a shade more false than Ananias, more tricky than Louis XI.: in Belfast even the Pope himself is hardly as unpopular. He does not deserve all this censure. He set himself to achieve an object,

and with remarkable pertinacity and personal courage he attained to it. He had the power of bending people to his will. He cared not how or where he had to seek his information, provided that it led him a step nearer to his goal. It was not ambition that led him on or desire of personal fame. The battle was to him sufficient, and he never knew when he was beaten. His enormous reserves of physical and mental power carried him through where others would have failed.

Almost at the last moment the carefully-prepared schemes were jeopardised. In a suburban raid by the military, De Valera was caught, and it was only by very great pressure that General Macready was brought to agree to his release. This *contretemps* is indicative of the extraordinary secrecy which enshrouded these negotiations. Both police and military were kept in the dark, for a word breathed in their ears might have caused a political upheaval. A party when presented with an accomplished fact will make the best of it, whereas premature exposure will give rise to certain heartburnings and doubts.

It is usually given to ambassadors keeping in close touch with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, or to generals on the field of war, to handle negotiations of this character. Certainly never before in the history of the British Government, and possibly in the history of any country, has it been the destiny of a civil servant

to be the chief instrument in such matters. Had there been a Chief Secretary with a greater sense of responsibility, the control would have been kept in higher hands. It was only on the eve of disclosure that the military were taken into confidence, and permitted to draft clauses so as to ensure that loopholes for insidious action by the I.R.A. were not left. Even the clauses which they were permitted to introduce were by no means of a sufficiently sweeping character to ensure a stalemate.

Whatever may be said of the results of the truce, it was received throughout Ireland with a sense of thankfulness, even though its effect was marred by ruthless murders being committed after the signature but before the date on which it was to take effect. There were sceptics in official circles who held that the signatories on behalf of Sinn Féin had not the power to exact obedience from their followers. Mr Cope's confidence, however, that he had got hold of the right people was not misplaced, even though they themselves had some doubt in regard to Cork and Kerry. All hostile action ceased as soon as the effective hour was reached.

Confidence did not go so far as to throw open the Castle gates and let the passer-by enter in. It is true that great canvas screens, hung from chimney-stacks and other coigns of vantage to conceal the goings and comings of motor transport in the Lower Castle Yard from

prying eyes on the neighbouring housetops, were allowed to fall into disrepair, and hung for many months in unsightly remnants, buffeted by every wind that under heaven doth blow. True is it, also, that the carefully sandbagged and barbed-wire-girt field-gun was removed, and only the mouldering bags left to mark the emplacement.

Save, however, for these slight changes, the Castle precincts were guarded as of yore. Yet in the streets of Dublin one might meet police officers and those members of the British garrison who had not been outside the Castle for months save for a swift scurry to England. The Auxiliaries beat their swords into ploughshares, and Lancia lorries, instead of bearing them forth from the Castle gates clad in the panoply of war, sallied out on the more peaceful errand of bearing towel-girt warriors to the pellucid depths of the forty-foot at Sandy Cove, petrol and fair wear-and-tear being charged against a benevolent Government. Tudor's typists were to be found far afield—on grass-grown tennis-courts, on golfing greens, or at the *thés dansants* of Dublin's cafés. A *dolce far niente* existence sprang up, and all these temporary servants of the Crown thanked Heaven that this was a truce, not a treaty. The latter was still far off, and as long as uncertainty existed disbandment and demobilisation were below the horizon. Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we may lose our jobs.

XIII. UBI SOLITUDINEM FACIUNT, PACEM APPELLANT.

Mr Cope had hooked his fish, but it remained to be seen whether he would land it. The next five months were to be the test of the art of this angler.

He had now taken full command of the situation. Sir John Anderson began to interest himself in an academic way in the establishment of a separate Government in Northern Ireland, but his policy was of the ca' canny class. By tradition he had no wish to see partition, and he was aware that the British Government itself did not desire to hasten matters for fear of precipitating feeling in Southern Ireland in the wrong direction. There was, in fact, another very real difficulty, and that was the legality of setting into motion in one part of Ireland the machinery of the Government of Ireland Act without at the same time setting it moving in the other part.

The signing of the truce was the signal of one of the usual outbreaks in Belfast, and Mr Cope, ever desirous of plunging into the thickest of the fray, hastened to the scene of action lest the hereditary faction fights of Orangemen and Papists, now armed with more deadly weapons than bottles and rivets, might upset the delicate poise of negotiations. Military and police were not pulling well together, and the Special Constabulary were, in his opinion,

paying too much attention to Roman Catholic gunmen, leaving Protestant gunmen freer scope. Hence his famous direction that for every Roman Catholic arrested, a Protestant should follow suit,—at least so it gained credence in Belfast owing to an unfortunate drafting ambiguity, the intention being merely to secure equally rigorous treatment of both. Finally, to cap his behaviour, he descended so far as to call on the Roman Catholic Bishop in order to secure his intervention in the interests of peace. This, in the eyes of the ruling powers of Belfast, was in the worst of bad taste, and went far to damn him from obtaining the post which rumour states was ultimately marked out for him by the all-powerful Sir John Anderson, namely, Secretary of the Northern Treasury—a post which in point of fact by training and temperament he was not in the least competent to fill.

He now retired again to Dublin, and there, until the month of September, maintained close touch with the Sinn Fein party, who were now busy selecting their plenipotentiaries and deciding on their line of action. He it was who ascertained what they were prepared to accept as a basis of discussion, and who was the intermediary in bringing their proposals before the British Cabinet. Time and again mat-

ters seemed to be approaching a climax during this period, and the Lord Lieutenant at one time grew so anxious that he recalled the Under-Secretary, Mr MacMahon, from a holiday in Brittany. The military in the South were becoming restive owing to aggressive action on the part of Sinn Fein, some of whose commandoes openly drilled, kidnapped officers and magistrates, and flaunted about in arms and uniform. It was only with great difficulty that the Assistant Under-Secretary restrained the Commander-in-Chief from action which might have destroyed all chances of peace.

Sir John Anderson still dealt with more specialised issues, such as the question of release of untried internees or convicted prisoners—questions involving nice considerations of policy, in regard to which a decision one way or the other might have considerable influence at a later stage if the peace negotiations broke down. It was he, too, who decided that the withholding of Government grants from recalcitrant local bodies should still continue, for the policy of cutting one's losses was now beginning to develop, and the more of this money that was expended in paying compensation to Crown servants, the less would be the bill which the Government itself would ultimately have to honour. The building of houses for ex-Service men was confined within strict

limits, housing subsidies were practically suspended, and, generally speaking, a policy of strict retrenchment was initiated. It was as though the signal of retreat had been given, and the Government had set about unloading itself of all superfluities. Auxiliaries began to be demobilised, and even the staff of the Chief of Police, having exhausted all the leave which could possibly be regarded as due to it, showed signs of breaking up.

In the late autumn the scene of operations shifted to London, and Mr Cope departed thither with the plenipotentiaries. It seemed that if his master-touch were absent at any stage there was imminent danger of dissolution. Sir Hamar all the while had taken his new cue boldly, and, as formerly he had, with an air of great earnestness and appearance of sincerity, scouted all suggestion that the Black and Tans were other than *chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche*, so now everything that Sinn Fein did was held up in the British House of Commons as either a model of moderation or the exuberance of a country intoxicated with the first draught of freedom. If the country had steadied down after the first draught all might have been well, but the blandishments of the Barmaid of Liberty have been such as to entice her customers back with too great frequency for another glass, until now they do not know when to stop, with conse-

quently disastrous effects not only to themselves, but to the more sober-minded frequenters of the snug.

Matters in the South of Ireland were a source of constant anxiety. The Sinn Fein Liaison Officer at Cork, nettled at the refusal of the military to accord him his I.R.A. military title, refused to have anything to do with the General Commanding at Cork. A somewhat novel departure even for the Anderson-Cope régime was made by sending to the South one of the leading propaganda experts in Dublin Castle to act as intermediate messenger between the military authorities and Sinn Fein. Rumour states that the former gave him very short shrift, and certainly his visit to the South was not as long as was anticipated. In Belfast, too, the liaison arrangements were practically a dead letter, and indeed only tended to friction between both sides.

The months of October and November saw Sinn Fein gaining strength every day. The longer that Dail Eireann could avoid coming to grips with the real crux of the situation, the greater would their power grow in the country. Republican courts flourished, while the ordinary courts became more and more deserted. Local administration now openly flouted the Imperial Local Government Board, and carried out by the direction of the Dail Minister schemes of public health and poor law amalgamation which Sir Henry

Robinson and Chief Secretaries had for years regarded as necessary, but never had the courage to carry through owing to local opposition. The Dail's methods were different. If interested guardians or councillors demurred at accepting a scheme, an order couched in no uncertain terms followed, and left no option but to obey.

Throughout the country, too, rates were being struck, and "optional" levies made for the support of the Republican Army, which was kept in being, and had not, as many expected, dispersed once the excitement of war had passed. The Chief Secretary shielded himself behind the fact that these levies were voluntary, but any one who knew the country well understood how far refusal was possible.

As the days dragged on no one in Ireland had any doubt but that there was only one conclusion—namely, that the British Government had decided that come what might a return to the old order of things was impossible. Ulster herself saw this, and refused any longer to be regarded as the British Cabinet's last card in this strange game of diplomacy. Sir John Anderson was at length told that the wheels must at once be put in motion and the way cleared for the Northern Government. The Crown Colony alternative in the Government of Ireland Act, an ill-digested proposal inserted at the last moment, had always been looked on as the chief

stumbling-block, but the Law Officers of the Crown proved amenable, and found that, after all, the new Irish Ship of State could legally work on a single instead of a twin screw.

The setting up of the machinery of the new Northern Departments was covered in a number of Orders rushed out in a period of about ten days. The decision that something must be done immediately took the officials at Dublin Castle by surprise. It is said that Mr Lloyd George, weary of being pestered to make up his mind to cut the painter, suddenly asked Sir James Craig how long notice he wanted. "A week," was the ready and unexpected answer, and so the Northern Government was launched.

There is no doubt that this severance of the two portions of Ireland weakened the power of the representatives of Sinn Fein who were negotiating with the British Government. A divided Ireland had, to every one outside the dominant Ulster party, whether he were Republican, Nationalist, or Unionist, seemed a desecration of the

traditions and history of Ireland. The action strengthened the hands of the ultra-Republican party in Dail Eireann, and gave them an excuse for throwing their weight into the scale against what is now the Free State party. It was only an excuse, for pique and self-arrogance would in any event have brought about the cleavage.

In December the agreement between the plenipotentiaries of Sinn Fein and the British Cabinet was signed. The last few days must have required all the energies and driving power of Mr Cope. In the negotiations, as an adviser on matters of administration and finance, Sir John Anderson had played a considerable part. As for Sir Hamar Greenwood, though his signature appears on the treaty, he was but a puppet in more powerful hands. The writing may be his, but the power that guided the pen was, so far as it symbolised leadership, motivated by English civil servants whose knowledge of Ireland's needs was derived from a stay of eighteen months within the walls of Dublin Castle.

XIV. LAST SCENE OF ALL.

The signing of the peace treaty did not wholly mean the passing of Dublin Castle, for it still remained for Dail Eireann to accept it. The publication of its terms bewildered people in Ireland. Unionists were

flabbergasted; Sinn Feiners, having asked for more than they ever expected to get, were for the most part astonished at its far-reaching character. They were so good, indeed, that a number of them re-

penting that they had not gone one step further, went over to the out-and-out Republicans. A wing of the Irish Republican Army saw before them the gloomy prospect of having at last to do an honest day's work, and, revolting at the idea, proclaimed aloud the cult of the liberty of the subject to think and do as he pleased. It was now the turn of the English people, and, incidentally, of Mr Cope, to be astonished. They had forgotten that Ireland is never grateful, that had the wise king lived in the twentieth century he would have added one other to the four things that are never satisfied. The Dail boggled over the Treaty, kept the English House of Commons waiting, adjourned for its Christmas holidays, and only in the New Year did it with great reluctance accept the gift.

This acceptance marked the end of Dublin Castle, and a few days later a ceremony was arranged to signalise the event.

Mr Cope, in his capacity as Clerk of the Privy Council, proposed, but Mr Collins and his Cabinet had to mark their independence. Everything was prepared in the Castle, and the Lord Lieutenant was in readiness to meet his new Ministers, but at the last moment the latter found that they could not spare the time. Viscount FitzAlan bore this slight with fortitude, though he intimated that he did not propose a second time to sub-

ject himself to such discourtesy. A few days later, however, Mr Cope brought his *coup* off. With fair punctuality Mr Collins and his entourage entered the Castle precincts. At the gateway, game to the end, stood the last of the Auxiliaries, in their hats jauntily fluttering miniature Union Jacks. At least they were spared the indignity of being asked to take part in any ceremonial. The half-dozen motor-cars sped to the Upper Castle Yard, and at the door of the Chief Secretary's office disgorged a motley assemblage: some in tweed caps and unpolished boots; others with the beard of yestereve still fresh on their chins; others with long lanky hair, collars and ties *au peintre*. Mr Collins himself was first in the door, and though the red carpet had in its time been laid down in the hall and up the stairway for many strange personages, yet surely this was the strangest scene of all it had yet beheld. A few minutes later the Lord Lieutenant appeared and his Ministers, some of whom had six months before a price fixed on their heads, or were spending a leisured existence in the walls of Mountjoy Prison, were introduced to His Excellency. The chiefs of the Irish Departments, all save Sir John Anderson, who, with great diplomacy, had found business in London too urgent, had been roped in, and now stood about the Council Chamber, for the most part obviously ill at ease, or regarding the proceedings

with that air of cynical detachment which most responsible civil servants in Ireland are bound to cultivate if they intend to pass their life with some slight measure of enjoyment. It was a scene worthy of a painter, fit for the master-hand of some great dramatist. The drama of seven hundred odd years—was it comedy, farce, or tragedy?—was about to be played out; the curtain was about to fall on the last act and the last scene. When it would rise again it would not be on the same play. The characters, the situation, the stuff would be altered.

It was only an English civil servant who could have carried that last scene through. It was, in fact, only English civil servants who could have shaped and brought to fruition the policy of those last eighteen months. Those who guided England's line of action in Ireland for that time had no stake of any kind in the country. Honesty of purpose is well, but it should be combined with a common interest. The Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries, General Tudor and his officers—they had not to live in Ireland for the rest of their days. The only stake which they had in the country was their reputation; and how many Englishmen had left that behind on Kingstown Pier and been not a whit the worse on arrival at Holyhead? It was the same with Sir John Anderson and the eight or ten other English civil servants who lived

together in the Castle. They settled matters by discussion over their dinner, and sought no advice from those whose knowledge of the country might have been expected to be more intimate. This cohabitation was dangerous, for it only intensified the English spirit of self-satisfaction. If they had had to live their whole life in Ireland, and not merely to cross the Irish Sea and revert to their original posts on the other side, the advice which they tendered might have been different.

But who ever in Dublin Castle adopted a policy that satisfied simultaneously England and the warring parties in Ireland? Who can set up to judge England by results? If it were any other country but Ireland one would do so, but in Ireland every policy has been doomed to failure—repression, cajolery, honest intentions, good government, bad government, no government, the reign of Viceroys, of Chief Secretaries, of police, of soldiers—all have been tried, and in the end how did they differ? After all, then, why criticise the last effort, the reign of the civil servant? It was briefer than the others; its results stand out more clearly even than the curse of Cromwell or the splendid achievements of the Land Purchase Code.

Dublin Castle's day is over. It now exists but as a name—Castle rule—a symbol of government without the consent of the governed; but in its time

it did govern : it accomplished its purpose, though that purpose was often narrow, ill-advised, and, above all, unimaginative. In the mouth of the Irish peasant it was a synonym for repression, but the peasant had broken its power twenty years before its end came. Yet the tradition is such that the Government of the Free State has hesitated to set up within its walls even the least of its Departments. It fears the taint that still clings to the name.

To-day in its all but deserted rooms the dust is beginning to gather ; the silence becomes oppressive. One feels that in spite of all the curses that were heaped upon it by a nation, in spite of the wrongs that it did, the evils that it condoned, here was something which lived, and now the life has gone from it.

“Men are we and must grieve when
even the shade
Of that which once was great is
passed away.”

TWO VALLEYS IN FRANCE.

BY STEPHEN GWYNN.

OF all things in this world, I most hate to be a tourist. The tourist is one who knows in a country the hotels and railway carriages; after that, the churches, the picture galleries, the places of interest or beauty which other tourists have discovered. What he does not know, and does not care to know, is the people, the life. Yet nowadays it is hard not to be a tourist. In civilised lands your only modern traveller is the bagman, for he must conform to the useful example of Ulysses, who not only saw many cities but knew their minds. A very ordinary Englishmen "travelling" in footballs, tennis-rackets, and other articles of sport, told me more illuminating facts about the city of Prague than the highly cultivated persons who have raved to me of its picturesqueness. It was much more interesting to know that both Czech and Slovak played tennis but kept to their own clubs, and that neither must know that you were supplying to the other.

But we cannot all be bagmen, and we have not the advantages of the eighteenth century, when it was easy for a stranger to form acquaintance wherever he went, because he brought news. Nowadays, the French, like ourselves, have

their specialised agencies for supplying information, and their newspapers tell their readers exactly as much about the real life of these islands as do ours about the life of France. Leave out the war, which brought us pretty close, and no two countries in Europe know less about each other; newspapers prevent us from realising the dangerous depth of our mutual ignorance. And yet the Frenchman and the Englishman, Scot, or Irishman can exchange invaluable knowledge most agreeably if they make friends. But how to do that? I certainly for one can never manage it by coming into a strange place, looking about me, and asking questions, which is the approved procedure of a tourist's first cousin, the special correspondent.

Then it occurred to me that France has trout streams, as many soldiers discovered in the war; and fishing is a great freemasonry.

When all these considerations were explained to a lady by whom it was my good fortune to sit at dinner last winter in Paris, she approved, and named to me rivers in Normandy and Brittany. Cider countries, I said; a good half of the charm of France lies in the local wine: there must be

vines as well as trout in the place of my pilgrimage. Then, she answered, you should go to the Avallonnais. I own without shame that this conveyed nothing to me, for many French people seem to be little more acquainted with the name. Yet I find that English-speaking folk, and many fishermen among them, have been coming there for generations—wise people. Many also pass through in motor-cars, and these probably would tell you that they know Avallon. Not they. A town of five thousand prosperous inhabitants with a great part of its buildings some five hundred years old is not to be known in a morning or an afternoon. For mere sight-seeing in the town, and still more in the district, you must take time; there are no general effects, but a bewildering delight of detail. It is a country of surprises; but in truth the surprise of all to me was that little more than a hundred miles from Paris places should exist as wild as anything in the Black Forest. It is true these hundred miles or so as the crow flies mean eight hours by rail. But the journey has this for it, that you follow river valleys all the way: first, along the Seine to Montereau, where the Yonne joins it from the south, a river as big as the Thames at Henley; then along the Yonne with its vine-growing slopes past Joigny and Auxerre till you reach the railway junction of Cravant and the valley of the Cure. The Cure is the

chief river of the Avallonnais, and, so far as one can judge of a flooded stream, it ranks with the Test for size. But Avallon itself stands on, or rather over, the Cousin, a much smaller stream, which joins the Cure at Sermizelles; and for some miles we travelled within a short distance of it, I wondering meanwhile how a fly was to be thrown between those close ranks of poplar or hazel. And it had to be fly-fishing or nothing. When I got to Paris at the end of April, with rod and tackle, my friends all said that they were sorry for me, but fish I could not. *La pêche était fermée*. Every human being knew that the close season ran from April to June; naturally, for fishing is a national institution in France, where all river banks, even the quays in Paris, are lined with happy anglers, and no one can fail to note their seasonal disappearance. I argued, however, that since trout do not spawn in spring, French law must take account of this natural fact; yet so little in France does the idea of *la pêche* comprise the idea of trout fishing that no one knew of any such exception, till at last I found a fishing-tackle shop and was confirmed. So, after all, we did not give up our expedition to Burgundy. Persistence has its rewards.

When at last we left the valley of the Cousin, the railway wound up and up, and we saw many villages, where every house had charm of colour or

quaint line, but no sign of a town. The track was running among the high uplands, through which in part of its course the Cousin has cut a narrow gorge three or four hundred feet deep. Even at its railway station Avallon was still out of sight, between us and this cliff edge. Nearly half a mile of pleasant suburban roadway had to be travelled, between quite modern houses; but at the end of it the Mall with its elms was bordered by eighteenth century architecture; and the Chapeau Rouge, to which we were recommended, was an old-fashioned rambling hostelry, too big to be called an inn, too friendly and informal for the frigid name of hotel. Its proprietor, a family friend of the distinguished publicist whose wife directed us to Avallon, was a sportsman himself, and told me where to fish; but first we had to see the town. One minute's walk and we were in the fifteenth century. The town had been built, for defensive reasons, on the very edge of the cliff between two smaller ravines which run at sharp angles into the main gorge, so that on three sides the ground falls almost precipitously; a natural stronghold, elaborately strengthened, and no wonder: it was Vauban's home, it was the centre of the district which that very great and wise soldier loved best; and his statue is there dominating a terrace to which the town as it were juts out; his bastions and works survive,

as well as one of the broken gates through which the wall on the accessible side was entered. Buildings of more recent date, two superb convents, probably of the *grand siècle*, had their place near the old and beautiful fifteenth century church, among houses not less old than it; but all the transitions were harmonious: there was no brusque interposition of the modern, and the old where it stood was nowhere dilapidated. The whole was as picturesque as Nuremberg; and, as at Nuremberg, life in it was vigorous, maintaining the strong continuity of half a thousand years.

I left my Younger Generation to sleep off her fatigue at the Chapeau Rouge while I went fishing. The road slanted down one of the side defiles, then turned at an angle, and I saw Avallon up against the sky, with the two convents and the church silhouetted and the ring of wall still complete on this side. Up to the wall was carried an intricate work of terracing with steep paths between gardens, and in every garden the citizens of Avallon—most of whom are small *rentiers*, retired captains and the like—were picking out their lettuces. At the bottom was the river, harnessed to drive the plant of half a dozen factories, tanning works, with great stacks of oak saplings piled in them. Up the valley, where the road got finally clear of houses, the gorge turned, and steep above me ran a great

cliff of mingled wooding, lit with the flames of spring; and through the green and silver-grey and olive were many cherry-trees in blossom, shell-white and diaphanous, most aerial of all flowering things. Broom was bright too on the slopes, and I walked along in a maze of beauty and strangeness; for the gorge narrowed still closer, crags of granite stood out fantastically from the trees, giant rocks were tumbled in heaps: a *Salvator Rosa* country in the very heart of France. Four great buzzards completed the wildness, wheeling overhead about the topmost belt of pine, their square wings making them exactly like aeroplanes—the most simplified bird that flies. At the entrance to this reach of the valley there was as beautiful a mill as ever delighted eyes; its roof of murrey-coloured tiles was weathered to an exquisite brown, just as its harmonious lines were by time faintly sagged, its angles slightly blunted, till the whole had acquired a rhythm, as if it had grown rather than been made. Swift running water was on each side of it, and beyond the water tall feathery poplars, France's favourite tree, shot up in the airy golden green of their young leafage.

That day was only an exploration, for the Cousin was in spate, running white, not yellow as with us, and fly-fishing was absurd. But except for one field I saw no place

in more than a mile of river where on either bank you could throw three casts in succession. When I got back, my host's son, a young officer, St Cyr trained, and back on leave from Germany, said that he would take us farther upstream to the real fishing grounds. We drove with him accordingly next day over the high ground on the road to Paris, then down by a zigzag into the valley. We left the car at a mill, and plunged into a path through thick hazels, where finally, just above a rough wooden bridge, our guide pointed to a series of plunging cascades—undoubtedly a likely spot for the worm; but the worm was forbidden, and no fish could see a fly in that turmoil, if there had been room to throw one.

I need not describe a blank afternoon, for which I was consoled by hearing that the best local fisher had the same result a day before. The flood was too high, but a lovelier mountain stream it would be impossible to imagine. I got my fly over many likely spots; but to fish it after our fashion, you would need thigh waders to walk up-stream, and even then casting would be difficult. The French work it from the bank, using the caddis-worm or some large natural fly, poking out the rod through bushes as best they can, and when they cannot cast drawing it to a loop, so that it shoots out the line—like an arbalest, as our young officer

said. In that way you may get a couple of dozen herring-sized fish—pink and well-flavoured, as I verified next morning when I caught and ate my only French trout.

But when I go back to that country for a serious fishing holiday it will be rather to the Cure, a bigger river, with larger trout to fish for, between less obstructed banks, and a place of even greater interest than Avallon dominating the valley. I console myself by thinking that if the Cousin had been in fishing order we should never have gone to Vézelay.

When Christianity was beginning to be re-established in what had been Roman Gaul, and when the modern France was evolving, monks established themselves in the lowlands by the Cure where it ceases to be a mountain torrent. Two or three centuries later, the Norsemen, pushing up the Seine and the Yonne, followed up this side valley also, found and sacked the monastery. The same thing happened about the same time in scores of places in Ireland; and the Irish monks met the situation by building tall round towers, into which they could shift their more precious belongings and themselves when an alarm came. But the monks of Vézelay had Roman ideas, and they moved back from the river bank (where is now the village of St Père) to the top of a high detached hummocky hill which rises like a beacon; and they built walls about

themselves, formidable walls: they made a town, from which they went out to cultivate. They were a strong community, who fought whoever sought to interfere with them, and as the feudal system developed, they made themselves recognised and respected as feudal lords. Vézelay ended by having fifteen thousand people within the circuit of its walls; and its church, which began as a small building of the Roman type, ended as an eleventh-century edifice, exactly the same length as Notre Dame. It looks a great deal longer, because of its greater severity, its absence of ornament. I can recall nothing more beautiful than the long recession of those high round arches—with the round flattened out in many places by the weight of the towers. There is interesting primitive sculpture too in the capitals—exactly like what the modern sculptor is trying to do to-day and not doing it.

The church is a national monument, and Viollet le Duc spent fifteen years restoring it. It is used for service still, but in winter the congregation go into a little room or chapel opening off the cloister: Vézelay now numbers some four hundred and fifty inhabitants, and by no means all are churchgoers. Its interest differs from that of Avallon as the dead from the living. When the motor-bus from Sermizelles dropped us at the rather primitive little hotel in the place

outside the walls, the Younger Generation and I decided that we should find our *déjeuner* somewhere near the church; and we walked through imposing streets of very old but perfectly solid houses, seeing no one. We surveyed the church, and the little square outside it, where was one silent café, with a depressed patronne, from whom we learnt that the hotel was unique and our only chance of a meal. So back we went, winding our way through narrow mediæval laneways—still meeting neither cat nor dog nor human. It was a day of blazing sun and the hour of midday food, yet even so the solitude was uncanny, rendered more haunting by the black depths of cellars cut deep into the rock from the footway, some of which seemed to be habitations. However, this rough little hotel, in a rough little room, had an excellent table for us, at which already were seated two professorial-looking gentlemen, and another whom we learnt afterwards to be a buyer of wool. All three were discussing the antiquities of the place, and the wool-buyer was the best informed. He said a great deal that was interesting, and said it with the finish of a perfectly educated man, before he went off to his business and left us and the other pilgrims to make friends. *Déjeuner* in a French country town is always a long business, but we were glad of its length; and after it we saw Vézelay in the profitable

company of two pleasant Frenchmen who knew their history. They took us first, skirting the wall from the outside, to the place where St Bernard preached the second Crusade, with King Louis VII. on a platform beside him, looking out over the valley, and the vast multitude which crowded about them and clamoured for crosses till the saint and his company were forced to tear their robes in strips and knot them into emblems. Eleanor of Aquitaine was there with the king; she had not yet divorced him to marry Henry II. of England. Here too at Vézelay forty years later her son, Richard Cœur de Lion, trysted with a later Louis when the third Crusade was launched. Vézelay was a natural rendezvous, standing on the confines of France, Burgundy, and what was then England in France. Its little ring of walls must have been crowded with a vengeance when it held 15,000 souls. No wonder they had plague in those days, for the water-supply is only a recent acquisition, celebrated by a stone inscription.

As a monument it would be hard to imagine anything of more interest than this town, now become a village, yet kept decent and even stately by national care. But that little apartment off Viollet le Duc's cloister gave me a cruel picture of the congregation, and what it must look like in the vast church. It was very different at St Père down by the river,

where is a normal little village with a church of normal size, yet such a gem of fourteenth-century architecture as Oxford cannot rival. The curé himself opened it to us, a charming old priest; an atmosphere of living use was in every part of his church. This was no last year's nest; and of all its rich and floreate sculpture very little had been broken in the ages, whether by Huguenots or Red Republicans. One of our companions said it was a pity that such a marvel should be so hidden away: I have not that feeling. France made it; it was the expression in its day of the French mind, done for the glory of religion and for man's most civilised delight: the beauty stands, carrying on its work of beauty (I speak as a layman), perpetuating and enriching the culture of a people among whom culture is more widely spread and deeper penetrating than in any other European race. A French peasant's son from any hamlet may become anything; and if his roots are here in St Père, this church, whether he attended it or no, will have made him the better and more characteristic Frenchman. That is what always strikes me in France, how close the supreme expression of intelligence is to the soil. Rodin seems to grow right out of it. So, if you like, does Thomas Hardy, but Mr Hardy is admittedly exceptional—as is Mr Lloyd George. Consider Mr Lloyd George simply as a phe-

nomenon, and you will recognise in him that tremendous strength of the primitive, the tough peasant fibre. Only what Mr Lloyd George lacks to increase his effectiveness is precisely that unconsciously transmitted cultivation, through the developed artistic instinct, which is everywhere in France.

Culture has many phases and the French educate in many ways: their school standards are far more exacting than ours. But they are also educated, less arduously, by a trained appreciation of what they eat and drink. At Avallon nothing struck us Irish strangers more than to see workmen coming in to have their dinner at the Chapeau Rouge. It cost a good deal, and by the standards of Paris or London it was worth much more than it cost; but railway porters and other workmen used to afford themselves the dark rich Burgundian sauces and their half litre of Burgundy wine. They are highly paid nowadays; so is similar labour with us, and the Irish railway servant would think little of spending the equivalent of seven francs on porter; but I have never seen him sitting down among the local bourgeois to the most civilised and excellent meal that his town can supply. These men without collars were in no way embarrassed by that lack; they behaved, in short, exactly like any one else in the room, except that one or two kept their caps on—and this, after all, is only a form of

conservatism which the Houses of Parliament have not yet abandoned. It is certainly no mark of disrespect. The richest peasant in the other valley of which I have to tell wore his peaked cap in his own house while he entertained us—and not us only, but his mayor.

If we did not stay longer in the Avallonnais to try conclusions seriously with the trout, it was because French friends had invited us to Orleans for the annual festival in honour of Jeanne d'Arc. The journey from Avallon, some eighty miles, can be made in a day, if you get up at 4.30: we preferred to sleep at Gien and spend three or four hours at Auxerre, where is a cathedral not only beautiful in itself, but beautiful by its position beside and beyond the Yonne. From Auxerre we crossed the high ground that divides the basin of the Seine from the basin of the Loire. Next morning, starting very early to reach Orleans for high mass, we had time at Gien to walk down to the river. Two days before this, sun had come back to a chilly world, and come to stay; this Sunday morning it was scarcely one hour risen when we came in sight of the wide bridge; the water was gilded with the low rays, the spaced-out poplar trees on the farther bank were washed with pale gold. No one was about, there was no air of wind, I cannot describe the stillness; the swift-flowing river was silent as the trees, yet it, like them, seemed

to have a finger on lip; all was hushed yet thrilling with jubilation; spring had come, the sap was surging: the world stood there glistening, fixed as if on canvas, but on the very brink of vital movement, a virgin ready to wed. Harpignies might have translated that ineffable clearness of vibrant air.

Orleans *en fête* was not normal France; it was a whirl of sight-seeing; our beautiful hostess, looking after us and her numerous cousinage, ran like a mountain stream, and her voice ran faster, with as many colours in it as the beflagged and decorated streets of Orleans, or the long procession with all its gala costumes, civil, military, ecclesiastical. Is there anything on earth with so much variety of charm as the speech of a charming Frenchwoman? It was a sad affair to go on from Orleans and be tourists at Blois; for at Blois only we were made to feel ourselves tourists. All we had learnt was to avoid one named hotel, said to be spoilt by English and Americans, so we scanned the array of omnibuses and got into the least ostentatious. I ought to have observed that it was first in the rank. The place was modest when we got there, rooms cheap and clean, so after survey of the town we returned hopefully to *déjeuner*. It was disappointing to find nobody but English speakers at the tables, and more waiters than guests. We had to order *à la carte*, and the first dish

recommended to us cost forty francs. When at last we had made the most frugal selection possible and were entering upon an elegant arrangement of veal with vermicelli and truffles, one of the too many waiters aggressively planked down on our table a bottle of Worcester sauce. "That," said the Younger Generation to me, "is a very subtle insult." I wonder what the chef would have said about it, for, to do the hotel justice, his dish was the last word of distinction. But we went out to get our coffee in the most ordinary little place we could find, and we asked the *patron* where French people ate in Blois. He laughed and indicated to us the Gerbe d'Or, which has this additional attraction, that it is on the upper level of the town near the terrace, with its view of the river that is perhaps the most beautiful of all beautiful spots in Blois; and it gave us an excellent dinner among the people of the town (but here were no workmen), with excellent wine thrown in, for considerably less than our *escalope de veau* alone cost us. We were also told where to stay cheaply in Amboise, and there we stayed; but between trains and nightingales a little way off, and a little owl in the lime just outside the windows, sleep was difficult; and I am sorry we had not tried the famous Lion d'Or or the Cheval Blanc, neither of which proved to be an extortionate animal. But at the Lion d'Or we heard some

Americans complaining angrily because the *déjeuner* — which cost eight francs, say four shillings—only included three or four kinds of *hors d'œuvre*. Fit only for a third-class hotel, they said. Why do such people stir beyond the Grand Hotel de Blois? They were not likely to discern that the white *ordinaire* provided by this Lion was just about all that a light wine should be, or that the local *vin vieux* of the Cheval Blanc was the excellent red which I have remembered more than thirty years.

We were not feeling like tourists at Amboise, because the friend to whose house we were going next day came over to meet us; and even when we were being escorted in a party round the chateau, the guide proved to have a brother in our friend's commune, and was humanised at once. But if I had to be a tourist, I would sooner be a tourist at Amboise than almost anywhere. The singing of the nightingales on that May evening in the island across which the bridge is carried was a thing to remember; and the colour of great plane trees on the Mall, just breaking into the first leaf, and seen up against the evening sky, made us cry out for one who can catch the thrill of colour.

Next day we were under vow to meet our host and assist at a tasting of wines by a company of Belgian buyers. The tram took us out from Tours along the Loire on the right bank, and I revived

memory of cellars and even dwellings cut and tunnelled into the chalk cliff. In the town hall of Vouvray we found a company of some thirty or forty people gathered about a table set with bottles and glasses. The mayor of Vouvray made a speech from which I realised that the illustrious Gaudissart's vein is not lost in the country of Gaudissart's creator. But, after all, the wine's best recommendation came when he had finished his discourse, and we were introduced—with much clinking of glasses—to the vintages: first to that of 1921, which by general consent in that district promises to be the best of living memory. Scarcely two months yet in bottle, it had developed no effervescence, but was already a delightful drink. The charming old gentleman into whose care I fell said to me sadly that he did not think he could save much of his own reserve to mature; the ladies of his household *tombent dessus*, and there was likely to be little left. But Vouvray wine of a good year will keep extraordinarily. We tasted a bottle of 1874, and if it was a fragrance rather than a wine, that of 1893 was admirable, and the 1906 perfection: not by any means the sweetened stuff which most people associate with the idea of Vouvray Mousseux. The big dealers, of whom there are a few, when they go to standardise Vouvray, spoil it; but the output of the district is essentially one

of small vineyards, each small owner making his own wine. Each man there wanted you to taste not only 1906 or 1911, but his 1906, his 1911. Very hardly did we escape sober; and we took no part in the subsequent visit to the vineyards or to the cellars, one of which has more than a kilometre of tunnels. We were to see all this detail at leisure near by in the valley of the Brenne.

Side valleys in Touraine are very different from the Burgundian gorges, wide and gently sloping, with water meadows on each side of the stream, replicas in little of the Loire valley itself. The ordinary buildings have not the mediæval look which charms in the Avalon country; but it is rare to find one which has not some unexpected harmony of line. And, of course, for domestic architecture on the grand scale Touraine is unapproachable. Within two miles of the farmhouse where these much-travelled friends of ours had fixed their country abode there were three châteaux. One, facing them, had its front in the manner of the *grand siècle*, but a wing had been added later in a more Italian style. A second, farther up the valley, had been given by Louis XIV. to Louise de la Vallière, and bore her name; it was almost secluded from sight, which somehow seemed in keeping with that gentle memory. The third, on the same side as our farm, was simply to my

mind the most perfect thing I had seen in Touraine: a design carried out in its entirety when architecture was at its best, simple, almost severe, yet perfect in the rhythm of its proportion, and in every swift, decisive, yet harmonious line: all unchanged since it was built. Tudor houses in England may have a more comfortable warmth of aspect, but they have not that distinction, that elegance combined with strength, which marks the best French work. And I believe there is no little vine-grower in those valleys who is not affected in his instincts by what he daily beholds. It gives him the cult of the exquisite.

Almost every man there is a vine-grower, and one soon learnt that a vine-grower's work is a constant effort after the exquisite. Their talk was like an artist's, not like a labourer's—laborious though they are. They speak to you of flavours and of the developing bouquet with amazing choice and felicity of terms. Of course in Touraine the whole speech is beautiful: it pleased me like a sonnet to hear a man say that his horse was *courtois*. And assuredly the prevailing industry raises the standard of culture. There is nothing mechanical about it: each process needs feeling for the art, each year's crop presents a different problem, and each man's great treasure is his store of choice old bottles.

We went one afternoon to drink a glass with the chief

wine-grower of the commune, a hardy old man, with fine-cut features. These Tourangeaux are an aristocracy among peasants; beauty is common, and above all, I have nowhere seen so many beautiful old women. The white coiffe sets off their delicately-chiselled lines, and though the face is hard and weather-beaten it has the quality of some subtle sculpture in wood. The son, a man of forty, was ruder in aspect, yet he too perhaps, like his wine, would acquire distinction with age. The wine which they had fetched out for us was the famous '93. It was opened with much care, and then a little tragedy began. The old man looked at it, sniffed at it, passed it to his son,—it was condemned. Another bottle was brought, dismissed in its turn, then another, and even the fourth did not satisfy its maker. "I ought," he said, "not to have put it in bottles till April. It was a strong wine, but I was afraid. I bottled it in February, as the custom is." He was talking, it will be understood, of an operation that took place, a decision that had to be made, nearly thirty years ago. But I did not know why he was afraid to wait till April. It seems that when the vine shoots in the fields the wine in the barrels feels it, and begins to work in the vats; it may all go wrong. In the bottle it is hermetically sealed against this sympathy.

Wine-making is a fascinating

mystery, to give the word its old sense. We learnt that for red wine you leave the grapes to ferment with the skins a fortnight before pressing, but white grapes are pressed at once. Red grapes so treated yield the pink wine, the *vin gris* (or *rosé*), which one sometimes drinks and sometimes finds very pleasant. Probably every Frenchman knows that it is the skin which gives red wine the colour; yet I doubt if many know what we, who were gardeners, discovered in the vineyards, that (in Vouvray at all events) the black grape is left with one long cane, as in a greenhouse, but the white is cut right back to the stock, and makes all its new growth each year.

In Vouvray, where small-holdings are the rule, it is still considered a new fashion to have the vines in ordered rows, so that a shallow plough can pass between them. When they were dotted in without order, work about their roots could only be done with the short mattock-like tool, which you use stooping double—a most exacting labour, and much of it is still so done. We asked why a spade would not do. “You don’t get on fast enough,” was the answer. Surely a laborious people.

French workmen seem to me finer trained than the English, inured as they are to the two kinds of hardship, suffering the sun as they endure the cold. Yet when I was visiting the school in one village the

master told me that the children were not as hardy as I thought. Wine makes them bright and quick, but does not build them up; and in that country wine is not only used when we use tea, but largely replaces milk. Land that can go under vines is too valuable to leave in grass. Whatever greenery grows by the roadside is regularly exploited; cows go out under escort to consume it. Even so, many a household goes without milk. There is a plot for vegetables with every house; but the small-holders often have nothing else but their vines.

The holdings are very small, down to an acre. The biggest holder (he who gave us the '93 wine) had about twenty acres, part of which, down in the level valley, is in tillage, but the value is in the vines. His crop two years ago sold for 75,000 francs; nearly all the labour is done by himself and his household, his other outlay is small, chiefly on artificial manures. In short, with twenty acres he is a rich man, who may easily put by thirty or forty thousand francs on the year’s working; and though he can be generous with his wine, he is a more amiable edition of Balzac’s *Père Grandet*; has scarcely ever been in a theatre, though Tours is within a drive; has travelled once (to Switzerland), but has no desire to travel again. I vastly preferred his conversation to that of most tourists,

and it is evident that his life contents him. Yet the economy which so strictly governs him and his like has formidable consequences. In that household, all thought and care was centred upon one being, his daughter's son, a sickly little boy. Far less wealthy people in France or in Ireland would spend large sums for the chance of putting vitality into that child by means which that household never dreams of. But the essence of their economy is that the child is the only child of the house, though its parents are young; and it probably would never have been born had not an elder child died. That is the fact of all facts in France, for France; and the two very able people with whom we were staying had reached their conclusions about it. Our hostess held that there must be State endowment of maternity, and on a high scale; not simply a subsidy to keep body and soul together in one room in Paris. Our host was inclined to think that the importance of number to a state was exaggerated; that the essential need was to secure complete development for everybody—to create *une foule-élite*, a populace where every man is a picked man. Even for war, especially for modern war, numbers are not everything, nor the main thing.

These questions are chiefly France's affair; but they are also Europe's concern, for if France goes, European civili-

sation goes with it. Only in France does democracy seem established on a durable basis. Our host emphasised the fact that school teachers, now highly paid, have become bourgeois; no revolutionists are going to come from that class, which before was their hungry breeding-ground. On the whole everybody gets a chance—or if not everybody, a vastly larger proportion than anywhere else—to share in the good things of life; and everybody is better fitted to share in them. The railway porters dining at the Chapeau Rouge meant a good deal, when you consider all that is implied. It meant more, that our host's preternaturally clever boy had got much of his schooling at the village school; and that now, down from Paris for a week-end, he went off to fetch two of his schoolfellows, one a vine-grower's son, one a carpenter's, to spend the afternoon playing croquet; pleasant, good-looking, friendly lads of fourteen, not the least shy; and they had held their own in class with the young Parisian. These things explain why often a French peasant woman may see her son take his place easily and naturally in the most cultivated society of Europe. The whole race are the inheritors of a great tradition, which expresses itself in a finished efficiency, closely allied to breeding and to art. All the regimented dressing of the crops along the Loire valley rank by rank, square by square, was

perfect, and also delightful to behold. Nature put her own modification and accent on the straight lines, like a caress; here in Ireland, she marks our wastefulness of ground with elder and with nettle.

But above all I carry away from that month of bursting spring in France a memory of trees. The vine is not universal, but everywhere in France are trees, and every tree is grown to a purpose. Our host in the valley of the Brenne showed us with pride the commune's poplars planted on a swampy piece of commonage, each tree earning, it was calculated, a franc a year; and then after thirty years it is harvested, and a sapling takes its place. Who that sees France can say that treating trees as a crop instead of letting them grow, as with us, uncared for and unhandled, lessens their charm? When I came back, even the beauty of Wicklow seemed to me disfigured by ragged, stunted, and useless growths. I missed the ordered beauty. In France trees are normally straight trunks, carrying their foliage high; with us they are normally giant bushes. The result in France is that play of air and sunshine below the high-lifted leafage which gives to French scenery its peculiar lightness and grace. The eye passes with delight through long avenues, where silver-grey leads up from lush grass to lighter greenness through which the sky is felt or seen.

If I had to choose between the two valleys of my stay, the Brenne would give me more of this airy lightness; it is more typically representative of France than the Cousin, with its rocks and gorges and buzzards and complete setting for a brigand opera. Yet for all its superficial ferocity, that corner of Burgundy is a most homely friendly country; and finally, although the Brenne was created by nature to be a home for trout and big trout, it is said to hold few of them (but they could easily be introduced), and for what there might be I was not allowed to fish. The prefect of that department had extended the close season by local order to all kinds of fishing; and I was staying with the mayor of the commune, to whom the communal *garde-champêtre* had to make his daily report. My host in quite other regions of the world had known too many difficulties of diplomacy for me to present him with the complications attendant on prosecuting a citizen of the Irish Free State, who was also his guest.

So between Brenne and Cousin I have no choice to make; my blessing be on both, may I some day revisit both, and in both catch trout! Yet if I do not, the wine of Burgundy and the wine of Touraine will be there to console; and I need not drink it in either place as a tourist, or alone.

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

A HUNDRED years ago Lord Castlereagh died by his own hand—worn out in the service of his country. And his name and fame are but now faintly emerging from the mist of detraction in which the pens and tongues of evil or foolish men have enwrapped them. The Whigs, whose rancour never tires, have pursued the memory of Castlereagh with a tireless fury, as though he was still present to fight for his country in the first line of defence. They hated him because he loved Great Britain, while they loved Great Britain's enemies. It is impossible, for instance, to imagine the frailest bond of sympathy which might have united Castlereagh and Fox. The men of letters reproached him because he did not mistake a showy eloquence for the end and aim of statesmanship, because he knew well that it was a greater offence to condone murder than to mix a metaphor. The poets, the most resolute of his foes, insulted and maligned him,

each according to his own whim and fancy. To Byron, Castlereagh was a monster, because his energy and foresight had been the undoing of Byron's hero, Napoleon, or because he didn't approve of Castlereagh's management of the English tongue. Shelley saw in him a determined enemy of the emotional anarchy which served him for a political creed. When he "met Murder on the way, he had a mask like Castlereagh," and it mattered not to him that the minister of his hatred had saved society. But as M. Capefigue, a Frenchman and Castlereagh's loyal panegyrist, asked many years ago: "*Fallait-il laisser périr l'Angleterre pour plaire à des poètes? Fallait-il seconder les desseins des brûleurs de métiers et des voleurs de maisons?*" To M. Capefigue's question a tardy answer has been given, and even in this time of revolutionary excesses the debts which wise and decent citizens owe to Castlereagh are at last remembered.

I.

Robert Stewart, Lord Castlereagh, was born in 1769, and having been educated at St John's College, Cambridge, went early into politics. He was no more than one-and-twenty when he was elected by County Down to the Irish Parliament,

after a contest, long since legendary, which is said to have cost his family sixty thousand pounds, and which impoverished his father until the end of his life. Four years later he was sent to Westminster, and seconded, in

1795, the address in our English House of Commons. Marked out for preferment from the beginning, he was appointed in 1797 by Lord Camden Keeper of the Privy Seal in Ireland, did Pelham's work as Chief Secretary until Pelham's retirement a year later, when he was himself appointed Chief Secretary at the age of twenty-eight. Not for a moment did he under-estimate the burden of responsibility laid upon him. He had a clear prophetic vision of events. He knew well what lay in store for Ireland and for him. France had declared her aim to be the tyrant of Europe, and Ireland, after her wont, had knit herself in the closest ties with England's enemy. It was Castlereagh's duty to suppress by all means in his power the rebellion which threatened the peace, the very existence of Ireland. The united Irishmen were a powerful body of men. They were said by some to exceed 50,000 in number, and they included rebels of all ages and classes. By a prudent policy, at once suave and stern, Lord Castlereagh put an end to the revolt. He did not fear to take repressive measures, whenever he thought they were necessary for the safety of the country. He was an untiring watch-dog upon the rebels. He proved a talent of just vigilance which has not often been surpassed. His system of intelligence was perfect. He discovered the plans of the rebels before they were become active, and by

his grasp of detail showed to the world the great administrator that he was. On the one hand, he was in communication with Emmet and his friends; on the other, the projects of the French Directory for the invasion of Ireland never escaped him. And it was mainly due to his energy and watchfulness that the rebellion of 1798 was finally suppressed.

Never did he underrate the necessity and the difficulty of the enterprise. Looking beyond Ireland to the shores of France, he was convinced that the pacification of Ireland was the first stage on the long hard road of victory over France. So long as the soldiers of the enemy were permitted to land upon Irish soil, so long could the rebels, led and enforced by the ambitious tyranny of the French, strike a foul blow at England's heart. While he never ceased to follow the movements of Napper Tandy and Wolfe Tone, he did not neglect such help as his English colleagues might afford. He insisted that England should aid Ireland with men and arms. "The force that will be disposable," he wrote to Pitt, "when the troops from England arrive, cannot fail to dissipate every alarm; and I consider it peculiarly advantageous that we shall owe our security entirely to the interposition of Great Britain. I have always been apprehensive of that false confidence which might arise from an impression that security has been obtained

by our own exertions. Nothing would tend so much to make the public mind impracticable with a view to that future settlement, without which we can never hope for any permanent tranquillity."

Stout fighter though he was, Castlereagh was always the friend of clemency. He was in favour of a generous amnesty while the rebellion was still unbroken, and was thwarted in his amiable design by the British Government. When the civil war was practically at an end, and when the battle had been fought at Vinegar Hill, he wrote in a congratulatory letter, addressed to General Lake, these wise words: "I consider the rebels as now in your power, and I feel assured that your treatment of them will be such as will make them sensible of their crimes, as well as of the authority of government. It would be unwise and contrary, I know, to your feelings to drive the wretched people, who are mere instruments in the hands of the more wicked, to despair. The leaders are just objects of punishment." And yet Castlereagh, like all those brave men who do not shrink from the suppression of massacre and arson, has been held up to the reprobation of the world. He has been set on the pillory which the Whigs keep for honest and courageous men. Twenty years after the event Lord Brougham, in a debate on the state of the nation, did not scruple to repeat ancient calumnies, in-

vented by worthless and interested rebels. "A man who has practised torture on men," said Brougham, falsely suggesting that Castlereagh had callously witnessed "the scenes of horror" of the '98, "had obtained a bill of indemnity for all transactions, of which such cruelty had formed a part." Presently Brougham, in his 'Historical Sketches,' told another story, either because the calumny no longer served his turn, or because he had forgotten it. "Lord Castlereagh," thus he wrote, "uniformly and strenuously set his face against the atrocities committed in Ireland; and to him more than perhaps any one else is to be attributed the termination of the system stained with blood." Lord Brougham would have done better had he never brought the false charge, or having brought it had made a speedy and public meal of his own words.

When the rebellion was quelled at last, the act of Union became a plain necessity. Since the end of English policy was the defeat of France, Pitt's imperative duty was to make one kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Thus only could he ensure that sense of security at home which was indispensable if our arms were to triumph abroad. Once more Castlereagh was set to work, and he displayed the same vigour in promoting the Union which he had displayed in quelling the rebellion. Now it must

be remembered that the problem of the Union as Castlereagh faced it in 1799 was not the same problem which has since baffled our interested politicians. It was the Protestants who were then in most violent opposition to the proposed change. The young barristers of the Four Courts, violent and vociferous, clamoured against it. The owners of the boroughs feared that the Union would put them out of pocket. Many of the Irish peers, deaf though they might be to the noisy propaganda of United Ireland, feared the loss of prestige and independence. The Catholics, on the other hand, cared not very deeply which way the matter went. They had had no part in Grattan's Parliament, and were not profoundly moved by the prospect of enfranchisement. The cry of what by a grim irony was called "Catholic emancipation" did not find a loud echo in English hearts. Though both Castlereagh and Pitt were in favour of it, its acceptance would not have been easy. If it had come before the Union, the Catholics would have supported what has since been known as Home Rule, for the mere pleasure of having their will of the Protestants. Had emancipation and Union gone hand in hand, the Protestants would assuredly have rejected them both. And if the stumbling-blocks which lay in the path of emancipation had been smaller than they were, the opposition of the King would have made progress along

that path impossible. Nor is it likely that, had emancipation accompanied or immediately followed Union, the course of events would have been much changed. The Irish are always eloquent of what "might have been." But whatever was made no difference to the irreconcilables, and it was always a pleasure for those, who failed to govern themselves, to invent new crimes for England.

The difficulties of the business did but encourage Castlereagh to a greater vigour. Opposition set a finer edge upon his temper. While he kept in view the true aim of his policy—the Union of the Kingdom and the security of the Empire—he neglected not the smallest detail. He wrote innumerable letters; he paid and received countless visits; and never once did he despair of ultimate success. His papers bear eloquent testimony both to his tact and his assiduity. He was under no illusion about the difficulties which he had to overcome. His friends were too deeply sincere to put him off with palatable fictions. "The tide of opposition to this measure," wrote Dr Duigenan, M.P. for Armagh, to him, "runs so strong at present in this city (Dublin), that some of the first and most popular characters who are perfectly convinced of the expediency, nay, almost of the necessity, of the measure, are afraid openly to proclaim their opinions, convinced that they would, by so doing lose that popu-

larity which they may in proper season use for purposes beneficent to Church and State." Castlereagh was unperturbed. When on 22nd January the Bill for the Union was thrown out, and Dublin was illuminated, Castlereagh took it all as an incentive to further activity, knowing well that the question of the Union would be asked again, and that pertinacity would ensure success. Month by month the policy of Union became more urgent. France was preparing fresh armaments to be used against the English in Ireland at the very moment when the cause which Pitt and Castlereagh had at heart was imperilled by levity and dissension. Castlereagh insisted still upon continuity of thought and purpose. "Nothing," wrote he to the Duke of Portland, "but an established conviction that the English Government will never lose sight of the Union till it is carried will give the measure a chance of success." Neither Castlereagh nor the British Government ever lost sight of the measure, and it passed the Irish House by a majority of 65 on 7th June 1800.

The security of the kingdom had not been attained without promises given, which now clamoured for fulfilment. There had been much talk of pensions and promotions and steps in the peerage, and Castlereagh, always a target for the arrows of disappointed Whigs, has been freely charged with political corruption. That he took

such steps as were needful for the success of Pitt's design is true enough; and even had all the charges brought against him been true, his defence would have been easy. The urgency of the business was beyond dispute or cavil. The Union must be made, or England must perish. The gathering force of France was a constant menace, and her determination to invade Ireland increased with increasing strength. Not many days after the Union was established, Castlereagh received from Mr Pitt's secretary news which explained his action. "A Swiss gentleman, lately arrived from France," said Mr Cooke, "gives this account that Bonaparte is adored; everything is plentiful but money; that Paris is all gaiety; that they talk little of politics. . . . Bonaparte's preparations for his campaign were kept as secret and were as extensive as possible; that he has another army of reserve as numerous as that which is victorious." These facts, long familiar to Castlereagh, were a complete justification for what Castlereagh had done. He had furthered the Union not to illustrate a theory of politics, or because he had, as his enemies have foolishly declared, a natural love of oppression. In thought, in speech, in action he had been inspired by a wise and just fear of France, whose intentions were hidden from him as little as her prosperity. So hazardous, indeed, was the situation that he had used

such pressure as statesmen are wont to use in difficult circumstances, and he had used it never to help an ambitious minister but to save the country.

He himself has explained what he did, with the quiet understatement characteristic of him. "What has been done," he wrote to Lord Camden ten days after the Union, "has proceeded from the best view we could form of the necessities of our Government; and I feel assured that the King's Ministers, in reviewing it after the object is attained, will not be disposed to canvass upon the cold grounds of abstract convenience in point of patronage, much less with any disposition to avoid the charge of having made the favours of the Crown, in an unusual extent, auxiliary to the measure." The King's Ministers, well satisfied with what had been done in Ireland, did their best to fulfil the promises of Cornwallis and Castlereagh. It was beyond their power to protect their faithful friends and supporters against rancour and detraction. The amiable Lord

Brougham was early in the field with vague charges of bribery and corruption, though, as Castlereagh's brother protested, one objection to the Act of Union was that it put an end to a vast deal of buying and selling votes and seats. A letter from the Marquess Cornwallis to Lord Wellesley, written on 3rd April 1800, sets the matter in a clear light. "We have hitherto carried all our questions," writes Cornwallis, "by a majority of between forty and fifty; but I am sorry to say that it is an unwilling majority, dragged out with difficulty to vote by the orders of borough proprietors who brought them into Parliament, and detesting the measure which blasts their hopes of obtaining those little *douceurs* which have so long been enjoyed by the members of the Irish House of Commons. The *great commanding interests* which have so handsomely supported us remain firm and unshaken, and I trust that it will not be in the power of clamour folly, or treason to prevent our ultimate success."

II.

Thus the first part of Castlereagh's trilogy ended in complete success. He had accomplished without fuss and without clamour the two tasks which had been set him—the suppression of the rebellion, and the Union of Ireland and

Great Britain. His reputation had marvellously increased, and Pitt, who was always quick to recognise a practical statesman, saw at once how valuable his support would be in the United House of Commons. One thing only threatened the wish and

the hope of Pitt. An English peerage had been offered to Castlereagh's father by the King, and thus only one life protected Castlereagh from sudden banishment to the House of Lords. There was much argument and many exchanges of views. The highest compliment was paid to Castlereagh by the general desire of the ministers that he should run no risk of departure from the House of Commons. It seemed almost as though Lord Londonderry's accession to an English peerage would involve a national crisis. Mr Pitt's secretary wrote to Castlereagh in grave insistent terms. "I am almost persuaded," said he, "that you will be obliged to postpone your father's peerage. No man was ever so flatteringly pressed to decline honours. The real fact is that they hope you will make the same figure and take the same lead which you have done in Ireland, and they sadly want some character on whom business may repose. Mr Pitt's health is certainly equivocal; his personal contest with Bonaparte may distress him should he be driven to peace. Windham is ingeniously imprudent; Dundas is retiring; Ryder is an invalid; Lord Hawkesbury not leading talents; Canning neither rank nor authority, and has not yet shown himself a man of business." It was flattery indeed to a young man of thirty, and the problem was happily solved by Lord Londonderry admitting that

"his Majesty's interests might best be promoted by his not having that distinction at present conferred upon him." I know not which more to wonder at—the triumph of the son, or the father's abnegation.

At the outset the father's abnegation met with scant reward. The troublesome question of Catholic emancipation suspended for a while the triumph of the son. When the King, in fear of violating his coronation oath, refused to admit the Catholics to the franchise, and denounced Castlereagh for a Jacobin, Pitt had no choice but resignation, and Castlereagh resigned with him. For two years only was he absent from office, and then, in 1802, overpersuaded by Pitt, he took his seat in the Cabinet as President of the East India Board of Control. Though he served under Addington, he remained the friend of Pitt, and was able to press the views of the retired statesman upon the Prime Minister, whom he distrusted, and the Cabinet, which he should himself have controlled. On the death of William Pitt, his friend and leader, Castlereagh became a stout opponent of Grenville's ministry, and returned to the Cabinet as Secretary of War when Portland was head of the Government. While at the War Office, Castlereagh kept one single-minded hope, one firm purpose before him—the defeat of Napoleon. His somewhat narrow intellect had the

quality of its defect, a rare power of concentration. He thought of nothing, worked for nothing, save the triumph of Great Britain; and when at last success rewarded his great effort, he had the satisfaction of ridding Europe of the menace which had hung over it, like a black shadow, for more than twenty years. At the outset he reshaped the Army, which he increased by volunteers from the militia as well as by recruits; and so well did his plan work that in 1808 he was able to put in the field an army of 532,000 men. Though, like other civilian Secretaries of War, he made mistakes, and irritated by his frigid despatches the vain susceptibilities of certain generals, the lines of his policy were truly drawn, and converged to the great end which he held in view. He supported wholeheartedly the seizure of the Danish Fleet after the negotiations of Tilsit, and thus prevented the Baltic from becoming what Napoleon had designed it to be—a French lake. And if the expedition to Walcheren failed, it was not by the fault of Castlereagh, but by the supine inaction and disobedience of Chatham. Had Chatham carried out the clear orders of the minister, success had been certain. The minister's chief objective was Antwerp, and Chatham, by attacking only Flushing, gave Napoleon the chance of strengthening Antwerp. Disease, fighting on the side of France, did

the rest, and Castlereagh, who, had Chatham succeeded, would have yielded the glory to the commander of the expedition, has been asked to bear the burden of failure alone.

The instructions which he addressed to Lord Chatham are his best vindication. "Your lordship," he wrote, "will consider the operation in question as, in its execution, more immediately directed against the fleet and arsenals of France in the Scheldt. The complete success of the operation would include the capture or destruction of the whole of the enemy's ships, either building at Antwerp or afloat in the Scheldt, the entire destruction of their yards and arsenals at Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing, and the rendering, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war." Chatham, by leaving Antwerp unattacked, forced Castlereagh's excellent plan to miscarry, and the duel with Canning, which followed, drove the Secretary of War into retirement for two years. Meanwhile he had begun to make a reality of Pitt's prophecy that Napoleon would be beaten by a nation in arms, probably in Spain, and had done his best to equip and support the expedition to the Peninsula. His wise judgment of men had persuaded him to put Arthur Wellesley in command, and the success of the campaign, which he had planned and designed, played a large part in the undoing of Napoleon. As in detail his

policy was wisely planned, so in its larger lines it manifested a true statesmanship. He understood clearly that England single-handed was no match for Napoleon, and he did his best to bring together the forces of the Allies, that they might combine by land and sea against the common enemy. The task was difficult, since the jealousy of friends may be

a greater danger than the pertinacity of foes. But the tact and patience of Castlereagh were sufficient for the strain. He was ready now to be firm in exaction, now to concede what was not of the highest importance, and his diplomatic skill held together a coalition which in hands less deft might have broken down under the strain.

III.

And this brings us to the third part of the trilogy of Castlereagh. When he returned to power in 1812, as Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Commons, he performed what many think his greatest services to the country. Henceforth he was, as M. Thiers called him, "England herself in the camp of the Coalition." By a strange irony the man who has since been universally insulted spoke then with the voice not of a government but of a country. When he came back to England from Vienna in 1814, the House of Commons rose to do him honour, and even Mr Whitbread silenced for a moment the voice of his malice. Meanwhile he had kept one dominant object before him, to hold the Coalition together. He knew well that Napoleon could be defeated only by unanimity, and while he did his utmost to strengthen existing alliances, he was always alive to the importance of detaching the Powers still

friendly to France from their allegiance. With the greatest adroitness he secured the neutrality of Sweden, and not only did he gather the members of the Coalition together; he inspired them to an activity equalling his own. He procured them subsidies; he supplied them with arms, with clothes, with all the material that is indispensable to victory. Thus he became, in a sense, the direct personal rival of Napoleon on the Continent, and it is the highest tribute to his firmness and his judgment that the Europe which he found at war he left in peace. His mere appearance at a congress was an assurance of its success. At Chaumont, in 1813, he exacted a pledge from the Allies to continue the war against Napoleon until it was brought to a victorious end; at Châtillon, in 1814, he compelled the Powers, eager in dissension, to establish a lasting peace among themselves. Yet, much as he loved peace, he

would make no paltry sacrifice to preserve it. He was always a man of courage, not afraid to take the risks of statesmanship. When Napoleon was safe at Elba, Alexander, with a dramatic gesture, put his finger upon the map of Poland, and exclaimed *c'est à moi*. Castlereagh, ready to face another war rather than leave the Russians masters of Europe, did not hesitate to make clear to Alexander what the consequences would be of his ambition, and Alexander was prudent enough to submit. But it was after Waterloo that Castlereagh reached the highest point of his career. The defeat of Napoleon, in which his Irish policy had been the first step, had left Europe broken in pieces, and it was Castlereagh's business to put the pieces together again. When he went to Vienna he left behind all thought of vengeance, all desire of profit for England. His chief aim was to preserve a proper balance of power, and he knew that this could be preserved only by refraining to punish France, and bringing her back to the old limits which were drawn before Napoleon began his career of conquest. Thus only, he knew, could the peace of Europe endure, and to this end he subordinated the interests of his own as well as of other countries.

Since Castlereagh's time we have seen a peace contrived by "plain men." One of the plainest of them boasted that he would not fall into the errors

which had (he thought) disgraced Castlereagh. The plain men are not quite so arrogant as they were, and their bungling, the bungling of ignorant men—for plainness is ignorance—has not achieved the results achieved by the wisdom of Castlereagh, who assured Europe a century's rest from war, and left it after a violent contest almost without rancour. Now Castlereagh succeeded in these aims because, in the first place, he was a practical statesman. "He was that rare phenomenon," said Lord Salisbury, "a practical man of the highest order, who yet did not by that fact forfeit his title to be considered a man of genius." He kept always within the limits of moderation. He did not aim at one target and hit another. He had striven to free Europe from a tyrant, and he was determined not to involve it in another and a worse despotism. In the second place, he was not of those who want to keep a finger in every pie. It was never his desire to control the affairs of others. He cared not how France or any other nation managed its affairs, so long as it kept the peace. He declared again and again that Great Britain would have nothing to do with a system which seemed "to lead to the creation of general government in Europe, with a superintending Directory, destructive of all correct notions of internal sovereign authority." So he was the enemy of all conferences summoned for no particular

reason, and he bitterly disliked the habit, popular then as now, of regarding foreign policy as a kind of travelling circus.

Opposed wisely and unalterably to interference with the affairs of others, he looked upon the Holy Alliance, the offspring of Alexander's fevered brain, as a piece of "sublime mysticism and nonsense." When Alexander, who regarded himself as a Russian Messiah, concocted his famous scheme with M. de Krüdener, Castlereagh would have none of it. He saw that it would result in perpetual intervention and perpetual war. If it were to succeed in imposing its views upon a reluctant world, it would need to keep an efficient army, ready to march whither it was ordered at an hour's notice. It would ensure a series of petty quarrels which could be settled only by the sword, and would keep the peace, so long and ardently desired by Castlereagh, away from Europe for ever. Yet he was at great pains not to hurt the susceptibilities of Alexander, with whom at Vienna it was necessary that he should work harmoniously. And he put his proposal by with a gentle irony. "The benign principles of the alliance of the 26th of September 1815," he wrote, "may be considered as constituting the European system in matter of political conscience. It would, however, be derogatory to this solemn act of the sovereigns to mix its discussion with the ordinary

diplomatic obligations, which bind state to state, and which are to be looked for alone in the treaties which have been concluded in the accustomed form." Thus he administered a welcome piece of flattery to Alexander's self-esteem, and made it clear that for Great Britain, at any rate, the Holy Alliance would remain a pious, inactive aspiration.

In truth, he opposed every design which he thought might interfere with peace. To the nonsense which has since been talked about the "rights" of small nationalities he was wholly indifferent. Had the foolish scheme of "self-determination," which will cause rivers of blood to flow presently, been put before him, he would have brushed it aside indignantly. He did not think that a common speech made half a dozen tribes, alien from one another in blood, into a single nation. He would have scouted the proposal that a mob of men, mixed in race as in language, should be held to be an indivisible state merely because they wished it. His practical intellect persuaded him to look askance at the views of dreamers and sentimentalists. He approved of nothing which he thought might interrupt the newly-made peace. He treated France, after the war, with a kindliness which some of the Allies found hard to bear. He saved Paris from destruction, while at the same time he insisted that she should return the works of art which Napoleon's despoiling hand had col-

lected from his foes. When France urged her claim to be admitted to the Grand Alliance, Castlereagh was ready to assent, despite the opposition of Russia and Austria; for, said he, if you exclude France from your councils, she will become the centre of a separate alliance of

her own. Thus he seems, in his wisdom, a pure intelligence in human shape, working without rancour, without thought of aggrandisement or revenge, and as he was hated for this impassibility in his own time, so he has been maligned for it ever since.

IV.

When at last the war was over and peace abroad assured, Castlereagh did his best to restore peace at home. The troubled years which followed the fall of Napoleon demanded a strong hand, and fortunately the Government, of which Castlereagh was a member, was not intimidated either by rebellious deeds or by subversive speeches. The Six Acts which followed Peterloo were useful and well-timed. They inflicted no hardship upon the peaceful citizen, and they made the way of the transgressor harder to travel. There is no right inherent in the "people" of anarchy, and so long as the law-breaker is uncontrolled, the "people" itself, not so sacred as it is said to be, suffers far more acutely than the simple citizens, who are excluded by their worth and thrift from its privileges. Yet it is Castlereagh's just suppression of disorder that has brought the wildest curses upon him, and gives us a clue to the persistent misunderstanding of his character. He had not the obvious virtues of the poli-

tician. He neither loved nor sought popularity. It was not his purpose to do what would please others, but what in his own mind he knew was for the good of the country. He appeared to the general cold and passionless, and this impression was not lessened—perhaps it was enhanced—by the grace and dignity of his bearing. The excitements and perturbations to which smaller men fall easy victims did not touch his stern tranquillity. As Lord Salisbury writes in a memorable passage: "No tinge of that enthusiastic temper which leads men to overhunt a beaten enemy, to drive a common cause to excess, to swear allegiance to a formula, or to pursue an impracticable ideal, ever threw a shadow on Castlereagh's serene impassive intelligence." That is perfectly true, and it helps to explain why those who regard politics as a branch of drama look down upon Castlereagh with a fool's contempt. The long struggle between Castlereagh and Canning, which ended in a duel,

was a contest of temperaments. Castlereagh was a statesman, and no more. Canning was a wit and a poet and a rhetorician besides. The set of a phrase was of higher importance to him than the wisdom of a measure ; and it is perhaps not surprising that, in overestimating his own talents, he should fail to appreciate the sounder judgment, the quieter method of speech, which were his rival's. They were by nature and training incompatible ; and though it is plain that Canning came far below Castlereagh in scruple, it does not matter much what was the immediate cause of the duel—Canning's readiness to sacrifice Sir John Moore, or his treachery to his colleague. The quarrel was foreordained, and there is an end of it.

Another cause for the misunderstanding of Castlereagh is that it is a common vice to condemn a statesman because he does not possess qualities to which he has never aspired. It is idle to repeat that Castlereagh was the best minister of Foreign Affairs in his time. You are met by the irrelevant assertion that he was a bad actor. The truth is that Castlereagh was a poor speaker and an indifferent writer. His speeches were verbose and without ornament. His despatches, according to the wont of such things, are indubitably dull. And these objections seem to me to be irrelevant. We do not choose the managers of our banks for their eloquence or

their wit. Our great captains of industry are absolved for the absence of other talents if only they are complete masters of their business. And why should we set up for a statesman a false and artificial standard ? Windham said that Pitt could deliver a King's speech at a minute's notice, and Castlereagh's method of exposition was less briskly exhilarating than Pitt's. Yet I have sought in vain for the mixed metaphors and ridiculous images with which his works—written and spoken—are said by the wits to abound. All that can be said is that Castlereagh had no interest whatever in the niceties of literary style. He was above all things a man of action, plain of speech and wise in counsel. He gave his life to his country, and died by his own hand an exhausted man of fifty-three. There is no statesman of his time to whom England owes a deeper debt of gratitude. He saved Europe from the oppression of a despot, and he did more than any other to contrive at Vienna a just and lasting peace. It does not, then, matter vastly that his literary style failed to win the approval of Moore and Byron ; and it is all the more necessary to celebrate the centenary of his hapless death, because his career illustrated the rare and noble statesmanship of which to-day we stand in bitter need.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

MURDER DISQUALIFIES.

BY ALAN GRAHAM.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUBBLY was now all-powerful at Dorning House. One could not say that he enjoyed himself, for he felt rather overweighted by his responsibilities. Bickerings and backbitings were rife, as was but to be expected, when seven men were enamoured of the same woman. It was curious how it panned out. Men who were to-day hardly on speaking terms because one of them had been favoured and the other slighted, would to-morrow be exchanging confidences over the perfidy of a third, who had wormed himself into the good graces of his mistress by some gross flattery of which the others swore they could never have been guilty.

Their only common ground was an intense loathing of their new leader. Jealousy apart, he did not hold their confidence. Neil had been a man of action, one whom they could look to in an emergency and trust to lead them to a successful issue. None of them, however, wished to share his fate, and Bubbly was therefore treated with cold civility, though the favour that he enjoyed with Francesca filled them with disgust. She could hardly move without her "Hon-

ourable Owen" in her train. She consulted him on the minutest detail of the household, and considered his advice more precious than rubies. He was her companion outdoors as well as in, for though she dared not go far from the house, she spent much time in the wild untilled garden, where late narcissi and cottage tulips and early herbaceous plants triumphed over the wilderness of weeds.

It was this that was the cause of her downfall. The house itself was never left untenanted, at least two of the retinue remaining indoors; but Francesca had such faith in Bubbly that she was perfectly satisfied with him alone as a protector when she wandered in the garden.

It was late in the afternoon, two days after the reconciliation of Jean and Neil, that the blow fell. At a moment when Francesca and Bubbly had left the disorderly flower-borders and were walking close by the thick shrubbery in which Jean had lain hidden on the morning of the false fire, there was a sudden crash of branches, and the Reverend William Murdoch, accompanied by Rab Wilson, leapt into the open.

Bubbly was seized from behind and held helpless by Rab, while Francesca swung round sharply and found herself face to face with the minister.

Bubbly shouted aloud for help, and two distant figures lounging by the house started into activity and began to run towards the danger-point.

Meanwhile the minister had stepped in front of Francesca.

"The priest again!" she exclaimed, her eyes alight with rage.

"There is no time to waste, madam," said Murdoch. "Come with us quietly and save trouble, otherwise I shall have to use force."

"Ah! You would kidnap me—never!"

She sprang back, and Murdoch put out his hand clumsily to grasp her, but she had leapt beyond his reach, and, like a flash, stooped to her knee and rose again to her full height, so that she faced Murdoch, a gleaming dagger in her hand.

Again the minister made a clumsy attempt to seize her. The dagger flashed in the sunlight, and then sank in his breast.

"God! What ha'e ye dune, wuman?" exclaimed Rab, as the minister sank to the ground, a crimson stream flowing from the spot where the handle of the knife protruded.

"I have treated him as he deserved," replied Francesca, but already her passion had left her, and her cheeks had grown pale with the pallor of fear.

Rab had released the trem-

bling Bubbly, and was on his knees by Murdoch, as Televant and Lindsay rushed up.

"What's the matter? Hell!" exclaimed the former, as he realised what had happened.

"Is it serious?" asked Lindsay, dropping on his knees by Rab.

"Serious? Look at him," replied the poacher. "I daurna move the knife. We maun get him hame, an' get the doctor, quick. Ha'e ye a caur?"

All question of enmity was forgotten in face of the seriousness of the situation.

"I'll fetch round a car in a moment," said Televant crisply. "Can you carry him across to the drive?"

"Ay. We'll be waitin' ye," replied Rab.

The minister moaned feebly. His head moved restlessly to and fro, and a red froth appeared upon his lips.

Francesca shivered and covered her livid face with her hands.

"I doot it's bad," murmured Rab in an undertone to Lindsay. "We maun cairry him sae that the blade doesna shift."

Slowly and with infinite care they got their arms under Murdoch's limp body, and carried him across the open to the drive, where Televant already awaited them with a large open car. They placed him in the back of the car, his body stretched upon the seat, and his legs drawn up. Rab got in beside him, and, kneeling on the floor, held him steady. Murdoch appeared to

have lost consciousness, for his eyes were closed and his breathing was thick and heavy.

"If he dies, she'll suffer for this," Rab declared ominously, glowering around with hostile eyes.

"He mustn't die," cried Televant wildly. "Are you ready? We must get him home. Lindsay, look after the Signorina. God knows what she may do to herself, and that little fool is useless."

"Haste ye, man. Dinna blether," cried Rab from behind, and the car started off down the drive.

Francesca, sobbing bitterly, and leaning on Bubbly for support, was making for the house. As Lindsay approached, she waved him wildly away.

"Do not come near me," she cried, her voice shaken. "My hands are red with blood. Oh, Honourable Owen, how could you let me do it? What shall I do? If he dies I must kill myself."

"Indoors—brandy!"

Bubbly's weak face was white, and his teeth chattered as he articulated. He half-led, half-dragged Francesca to the smoking-room, where she threw herself upon a couch, and buried her face in a cushion.

Bubbly poured a great measure of brandy, which he drank off neat. His hand was then sufficiently steady to carry a glass to his mistress.

"Come, drink this," he said, laying his hand on her shoulder. "Don't give way, Signorina. He may not be badly hurt."

"Oh, the poor man!" moaned Francesca. "Mio Dio, how could I do such a thing?"

She rose to her feet suddenly and desperately, and paced the floor in an agony of remorse. Bubbly persevered, and at last brought her to the point of drinking from the glass he held. It was neat brandy, and he had half-filled the glass. Probably it was the best thing he could have done, for gradually Francesca grew less restless, and was content to sob uncontrolledly upon the couch. Exhaustion, and the fumes of the brandy, gradually sent her into an uneasy sleep.

Meanwhile the car, bearing Rab and his patient, arrived at the manse. The door was opened by Mrs Murdoch herself, her baby in her arms.

"I've bad news for ye, mistress," said Rab kindly. "The meenister's met wi' a—an accident. I doot it's gye bad. Me an' him'll cairry him in."

Mrs Murdoch rushed out, her baby clasped to her breast, her face white as a sheet. It was a terrible sight that met her eyes. Televant, who had run round to open the door of the tonneau, was shocked at the change that had taken place on the short journey. Murdoch's face had lost all trace of colour, save where the crimson froth had trickled from lip to chin. His clothing was sodden and dripping red, and he looked past all help.

Televant put out his arm in an attempt to prevent Mrs Murdoch seeing what he had

seen, but he was too late. At sight of the terrible spectacle she gave one piercing shriek and fell back in the arms of Rab Wilson, who, fortunately, had followed her.

"She's fainted, *puir body*, an' nae wunner," said Rab. "I'd better tak' her in first."

He lifted the mother and child in his strong arms and carried them together indoors. Through the open window Televant heard him breaking the news to Jean Rintoul.

"Keep oot o' it, Miss Jean, it's an awfu' sicht," he warned her.

"I'm not afraid," replied Jean. "Mrs Murdoch is past helping, and you must have some assistance."

She came out with Rab, and though she shrank back at first sight of Murdoch, she kept her self-possession, and took over control of the whole household.

Murdoch was carried into the house and laid out upon his own bed. He showed not a sign of consciousness, but his thick breathing showed that there was still life in him.

"Noo, aff wi' ye for Doctor Boag. I'll stop wi' the meenister, though Guid kens there's no' muckle I can dae."

He directed Televant to the doctor's house, and returned to the bedside of Murdoch.

Televant was fortunate in finding the doctor at home, and quickly gave his message.

"The minister had an accident!" he exclaimed. "What did he do? Where is he injured? I must know what to take."

Dr Boag was a short man, past middle age, with short grey side-whiskers and shaven lips. He was quite a crony of the parish minister, and his consternation was natural.

Televant, seeing no other course, told the truth.

"He has been stabbed in the breast. We must hurry."

"Stabbed! In Dorning! Good God, sir, who in Dorning would stab the minister?"

"Hurry, man, hurry, or we may be too late. Time enough to ask questions later."

Televant fixed his solitary eye on the dilatory old doctor, and practically hypnotised him into silence. He crammed a case of instruments and some dressings into a bag, and followed Televant to the waiting car. Within two minutes they were back at the manse.

Televant waited with what patience he could muster for the doctor's verdict. His thoughts were all for Francesca. If Murdoch should die—— He had to face the possibility—— nay, the probability. That she should not be arrested he was determined, at whatever cost to himself. But what an end to a delightful adventure! Until this terrible thing had occurred, it had been almost idyllic.

The doctor took long over his examination. When at last he appeared in the doorway, his face was inscrutable.

"Well?" cried Televant anxiously.

"I can't say. We must have a specialist from Edinburgh. They have a telephone

at the post-office. You'd best take me there."

Telefant was ready to do anything that might save his mistress from a charge of murder. As they rushed round the village green Dr Boag rambled on.

"He's in a bad way. I can't say how bad. And his poor wife—— Good God, man, who could have done such a thing? We must go for Sandy Johnston, the constable, next."

"Can't you leave that until the specialist has been?" asked Telefant quickly.

"Certainly not. The thing must be inquired into at once. It's terrible, terrible!"

He leapt out at the post-office, and was gone for full five minutes.

"I've got Tillotson. Can you run to Edinburgh and fetch him?" he said when he returned. "It'll maybe make the difference between life and death."

"I'll do anything. I can have him here within three hours if he's ready to start right away. It's past five now. I should be back between eight and nine. What's the address?"

The doctor scribbled hastily on an envelope and passed it to Telefant.

"There you are. Make haste. I'll 'phone him again to be ready for you."

Telefant, a man of action, was off like a shot down the Edinburgh road, without another word.

At Dorning House his return was awaited with the utmost

anxiety. His five fellow-officers were almost crazy on behalf of their mistress. It was curious that they did not think to blame her for what she had done, however much they might deprecate the actual deed. They all knew her passionate nature, and considered this act as one of its unfortunate manifestations, to be pitied rather than condemned.

When Telefant did not return within an hour the uncertainty became almost unbearable. Fortunately Francesca was still in a troubled sleep, so that she was spared the agony of waiting. As for the Honourable Thomas Owen, he had drowned his terror in brandy, and had been carried to his room and thrown on the bed like a sack, by Wilson and Lindsay.

"Perhaps he's dead, and Telefant has bolted with the car," suggested Lindsay when a second hour had passed without news. "Shall I take the other car into Dorning and see what I can find out?"

His suggestion voiced a suspicion that had passed through each of their minds, though it is but fair to say that they felt ashamed of it.

"No, you don't," replied Pringle sharply. "We must keep that car ready all the time for the Signorina."

"What d'you mean?" demanded Lindsay angrily. "Do you think I would leave her in the lurch?"

"Apart from that possibility the need might come at any

moment. The car must be ready to the second."

Lindsay scowled, but said no more.

So they waited until shortly after ten o'clock, when they were startled by a loud hammering, that sounded as though some one were trying to beat down a door.

They rushed pell-mell into the hall and listened. The noise came from the dining-room. They followed it, Lindsay bearing a lamp, only to find the room apparently empty, and the knocking more furious than before.

"The secret panel!" exclaimed Beattie.

McNeil had taken the precaution of fixing the panel up by nailing two boards across it after it had served its purpose. He had been determined that Rufus Rintoul should have

no chance of using the passage a second time.

Now, as the five men looked, they saw the woodwork vibrate, as though to the kicks of some one on the other side.

"Who can it be?" said Lindsay.

"Whoever it is, we must take a chance and see," said Pringle. "After all, there are five of us."

Seizing from the hearth an old-fashioned fire-shovel with a flat end, he slipped it behind one of the boards and used it as a lever. As the boards were only fixed with French nails, they came away without much difficulty.

Then the panel swung back, and to their astonishment Neil McNeil, his face streaming with blood, and his clothes in terrible disorder, stepped into the room.

CHAPTER XXV.

On the day upon which Francesca Marinetti made her desperate attack upon the Reverend William Murdoch, the Rintoul Arms was at its dullest. In ordinary circumstances Neil McNeil would have been bored to tears by the mere monotony of existence in such a place; but his circumstances were not ordinary. He still lived in a world of his own—a world that was the child of his own imagination. It was created mainly out of chaos, as worlds have been before, but Neil would not admit to himself the unsubstantiality of his raw material.

He had not met Jean since the occasion of their reconciliation. He hardly wanted to. He was satisfied, for the moment, with the progress he had made, and feared to impair the impression that he had made by too precipitate action.

Strangely, no rumour of the extraordinary development at Dorning House filtered through to the gossip exchange of the Rintoul Arms until after closing time. Mr Morrison was a stickler for the regulations. His "Closing time, gentlemen," synchronised with the eight-day clock in the lobby, for he would

never admit that it might be wrong. His word was law, and the habitués filed out with the bidableness of lambs. An altercation in the Rintoul Arms would have been the next thing to sacrilege.

When the doors were locked and sneaked, and all the windows snibbed, Mr Morrison returned to the bar parlour, where his solitary guest still lingered.

"Ye'll ha'e a drap o' toddy afore ye gang tae bed?" he asked hospitably.

Neil acquiesced, and the landlord busied himself in the preparation of the national beverage. As he set the steaming glasses upon the small table, there came a sharp rat-tat upon the outer door.

"Losh! What's that?" exclaimed Mr Morrison.

"A thirsty villager?" suggested Neil, with a slight smile.

"Na, na. They ken better," replied the landlord. "It maun be something by ord'nar' afore onybody wud knock up the Rintoul Airms after closing time."

He shuffled off to the front door, and Neil heard the raucous drawing of the bolts, and the crunch of the lock as the key was turned.

"Man, is't you, Sandy?" exclaimed Mr Morrison. "Shairly ye ken better than tae think ye'll catch me oot. But maybe a dram——"

"Awa! Mr Morrison. You an' yer dram! But noo ye name it, ma thrapple's as dry as stour. There's murder in the toun. The meenister's deid. I maun ha'e yer telephone. But a dram——"

Neil heard the words plainly, and sat up stiff and earnest.

His mind jumped to Francesca instantaneously.

"Losh save us! The meenister deid! Come ben the hoose, Sandy. Murdered, ye say?"

Neil heard the heavy tread of the constable in the bar. He himself was concealed from sight round the corner of the bar parlour. He heard the sound of liquor pouring into a glass.

"Guid health, Mr Morrison. Ay, it's an awfu' bees'ness, an' me got tae mak' the arrest. D'ye ken, Mr Morrison, I've never took up ocht but a drunk sin' I jined the force. I maun telephone for assistance, fur it's a desperate gang I'm up agin."

Neil heard him call the exchange.

"Is that you, Sairgent Fraser? It's Sandy Johnston, the Dorning polisman, speakin'. Can ye spare me a dizen men, an' come yersel'? It's a serious maitter. The meenister, Mr Murdoch, is stabbed deid. Ay, ye may say that! Wha? It's a furrin wuman up at the Big Hoose. Na, na. That's a' very weel, but she has a whole gang o' cut-throats wi' her. It's mair than ma life's worth tae gang by masel'. Eicht? A' richt, if that's the best ye can dae. Hoo lang? Twa hoors. A' richt, I'll wait ye at the Rintoul Airms. Ay, I've got watchers on the hoose, freends o' mine."

Just as the constable ceased speaking, Neil was aware of fresh footsteps entering the bar.

"What brings you here, Rab

Wilson?" said Mr Morrison. "D'ye no' ken it's bye closin' time?"

"I seen the door was on the jar, an' I thoct ye'd like tae hear the news, Mr Morrison. I'm that fashed forbye, that I thoct ye might stretch a point an' gi'e me a wee drap tae pu' me thegither. What's guid for the polisman'll no' dae me ony hairm."

"An' what's yer news?" asked Mr Morrison, filling a fresh glass.

Rab's argument was too strong for him.

"The meenister's murdered, but I daur say Sandy's telt ye already."

At the sound of Rab's voice Neil came forward.

"This is terrible, Rab," he exclaimed. "Is it true about the Signorina?"

"It's gospel truth," replied Rab. "I was a witness tae it. She stabbed him tae the hairt. He's been deid this 'oor."

"Heavens! What a blow for poor Miss Rintoul!"

"It's his puir wuddie I'm thinkin' o', wi' her wee bairn. I doot if she'll get ower it. She tak's on sae bad."

"I must go to the manse," declared Neil. "There's no man about the place, and——"

"I dinna ken that ye could dae onything, but it's true enuch. There's nae man aboot the hoose. Doctor Boag's been in an' oot, but he's awa' hame noo."

"At least I can go and see."

Neil seized a cap and hurried from the inn. He had more in

his mind than he had declared to Rab. For all his sympathy with Jean Rintoul, he had room to think of the terrible fate that awaited Francesca. No doubt she deserved it, yet there were extenuating circumstances that no jury would consider. How far the blame was hers, and how far her dead uncle's, was a problem beyond solution. The whole circumstances were abnormal, yet no allowance for that would be made in a court of law.

Notwithstanding the harshness of her treatment of him, Neil could not bear to contemplate her arrest and certain conviction. He felt that he would rather see her dead. With her wild and passionate temperament, imprisonment would be torture to her. Another possibility occurred to him. When she heard of her victim's death, was it not probable that she would take her punishment into her own hands, and kill herself on the impulse of a moment? With the knowledge that he had of her, he thought it more than likely.

He must prevent that, he determined. There had already been more than enough tragedy in connection with this accursed inheritance. For Jean's sake alone he must prevent it. He did not want the girl's future to be darkened by the memory of a second crime.

At that his imagination flew again to the girl he loved. He pictured the misery that the minister's death must have brought to her. She must feel that but for her, and his

unselfish championship of her, he would be still alive. He pictured her torture in facing the minister's wife, feeling all the time how, in her heart, the widow must accuse her.

The agony of his thoughts whipped Neil into a run, and he arrived breathless before the manse. There was a light dimly burning in an upper room. Below all was dark. He hesitated to knock up the distracted household when there was but a bare chance that he could be of service.

The decision was taken out of his hands. He saw a shadow move in the dim-lit room, and then a window was pushed up quietly. Evidently his footsteps had been heard.

He could distinguish nothing of the figure that leant out, but the low voice was Jean's.

"Who is there?"

"Neil McNeil," he answered, subduing his voice to match the girl's. "I have just heard. I came to see if I could do anything to help you."

"Sh! Go round to the back-door. I'll come down to you."

He did not have long to wait before Jean was at his side in the darkness.

"This is a terrible business, Jean," he began, using her name for the first time, and that without reproach.

"It is—Neil," replied the girl. "It was good of you to come, though you can do nothing. What is there that could be done?"

"I just wanted you to know that I am ready—all the time

—to help you in any way I can. Thank God you are bearing it so courageously. Mrs Murdoch, is she——"

"She is asleep. The doctor gave her something. It is the best thing she could do. But oh, Neil, think of my cousin! I cannot believe she meant it—and the police are already after her."

"Does she know he is dead?"

"I don't think so. No one has been here. I have no reason to think well of her, but, somehow—it may be because she is my own flesh and blood—I can't bear to think of her—in prison. It seems disloyal to Mr Murdoch, yet what good can it do him now to have her—punished?"

In the darkness Jean's voice sounded strange to Neil. It seemed, he thought, as though the strain of controlling herself had driven her to an extreme of coldness, so emotionless did it sound.

"Would you have her escape if you could?" asked Neil quietly.

"I think I would—though it seems dreadful to say so," she admitted. "But it is too late. The police are warned, and Dr Boag told me that the house is already watched."

"That is nothing. The local policeman is waiting for reinforcements. I can get to her in time. I, too, would like her to escape. What she did was on the impulse of a moment. Presumably your friend attacked her. Your dead uncle must bear at least half the blame for this tragedy."

"Do what you can, then," agreed Jean, in her cold unnatural voice from the darkness. "If you can get to the house unnoticed, perhaps you can get her away unnoticed. After all, you were on her side."

"I'll do my best. There are two cars at the house, and we might make a dash for it. Her only hope is to be out of the country before the hue and cry is raised. That won't be easy, but it may be just possible. If we can get to Leith there is a bare chance. But I had better tell you nothing."

"No, you must hurry, or you may be too late," urged Jean, with a catch in her voice that made Neil think that she had used her strength of will to the utmost, and was on the verge of a breakdown.

"Good-bye," he said, and put out his hand, seeking hers in the darkness.

He found it, and would not let it go.

"Jean," he whispered, "when I have done this, may I—may I come back and report to you?"

"Don't you think I had better continue to know nothing? There is no need for you to come back. Besides, there may be danger. If it is

known that you helped, you will be arrested."

"I'll take my chance of that. But—may I come back?"

All this time he had continued to hold her small hand pressed in his. As she drew it slowly away, she said in a low voice, from whose tone he could gather neither hope nor discouragement—

"I cannot forbid you the village, can I?"

Before he could answer she was gone, and he heard the door close softly behind her.

He was now irrevocably committed, not merely to the warning of Francesca, but to the responsibility for her ultimate escape. For a moment he stood where Jean had left him, considering his course. Should he attempt to enter and cross the policies, and take the risk of being seen and captured by Sandy Johnston's watchers? He dared take no risk, for if his warning failed, Francesca's fate was sealed. It must be the passage from the castle. Luckily the moon was rising, so that it would be easy to scale the wall and reach the shaft. Once below, there were candles that he had himself left behind. The boarded panel did not worry him. He felt sure he could make himself heard in Dorning House.

CHAPTER XXVI.

By the time Neil reached the castle wall, the moon was sufficiently high to aid him in clambering along the branch

and dropping safely within. When, however, he left the courtyard for the dungeons below, he had to depend on

his meagre supply of matches, and of these he had to be sparing.

With infinite caution he slipped over the lip of the well, and in pitch darkness felt his way to the bottom without mishap. There he struck another match, and found the first of the candles that he had left behind when he had explored the passage. With this feeble flame to light him, he started down the tunnel. He was drawing near the last bend, which concealed the steep steps leading upward to the level of Dorning House, when he was startled to see ahead, shining round the concealed turning, a light brighter than his own.

Neil stopped abruptly, puzzled and alarmed. The light signified some human presence, and who knew of the tunnel but Rufus Rintoul? Unless—yes, some of Francesca's men might well be reopening the passage to establish a sure means of retreat.

Cautiously Neil approached the bend that hid the source of light from him, and peering round the corner, quickly found his second explanation to be wrong. It was no exploring party from Dorning House—indeed, there was no one in sight at all,—yet there were clear evidences that some one—and that some one could only be Rufus Rintoul—was not far distant. A pipe, with a wisp of smoke curling from its bowl, lay upon the ground, beside a crumpled army blanket. Near by stood a kit-bag with yawning mouth, and various

minor personal belongings—a flask, a pair of hair-brushes, a cap that Neil recognised immediately—lay scattered about.

From a hook upon the wall hung an acetylene cycle-lamp, and by its brilliant light Neil noticed something further and yet more curious. At first he gazed stupidly and uncomprehendingly at his latest discovery, and then it came to his mind in a flash why Rufus was here. Close by the wall of the passage, with the beam of the lamp playing full on them, lay a number of black cylinders, such as one sees in a dentist's operating room. One, Neil noticed, had a reducing valve and tube already screwed to the nozzle.

But where was Rufus Rintoul? That, too, was clear enough. From where Neil crouched, peering cautiously round the corner, but a few steps of the ascent to Dorning House were visible. Rufus must be above, perfecting his preparations.

Neil was now upon the horns of a dilemma. He dared not go back—time would not permit. If he went forward, he must pass Rufus. No doubt, if he told Rufus the plain truth, Rufus would be only too ready to let him pass, for he would gain his end without the aid of these vicious black cylinders, but—

Neil's thoughts returned to Jean. Had the death of her friend Murdoch eliminated her from the contest? If so, it mattered not a straw whether Rufus gained his end by guile

or simply walked into possession of the estate. But it might be that even in the face of tragedy Jean would cling to her rights.

For a moment Neil was on the brink of a discovery. It passed him by a hair's-breadth.

As he could not conceive Jean's attitude, so could he not afford to tell the truth to Rufus. There was but one other way—force! Man to man, could he come out on top? He looked round for a weapon. Already he heard steps descending. This was no time for chivalry, but he could see nothing—nothing that he could use.

The large brown-booted feet of Rufus Rintoul were already visible upon the steps, when a gleam of hope set Neil's pulses hammering. It was desperate, but he must take the chance if it came his way—and he must *make* it come his way.

Rufus Rintoul entered the passage, and bent down to pick up his still smoking pipe. In one hand he carried a carpenter's brace, with the bit still screwed in position. This he threw upon the ground, and, seating himself upon the blanket, sucked upon his pipe to revive the all but extinct combustion. As the smoke poured in increasing volume from his lips, he looked at his watch and grunted.

Pursuing the plan that he had formulated in a few seconds, Neil stepped round the corner of the tunnel. Rufus started to his feet, and drew back towards the steps. For only

a fraction of a second was he disconcerted, and then a grim smile crossed his lips. He was the first to speak.

"An unexpected pleasure, McNeil!" he said, raising his bushy red eyebrows questioningly.

"The unexpectedness is mutual," replied Neil.

"But not the pleasure, eh?" retorted Rufus quickly. "Are you in the habit of taking an evening stroll in the bowels of the earth?"

"Just about as often as you are accustomed to camping out in a similar situation," replied Neil, who, for his own purpose, endeavoured to meet Rufus on his own ground.

Each man had his eyes fixed upon the other, and in both every sense was strung to its highest pitch. Instinctively they knew that the time had come that had to prove which had the stronger muscle and the keener wit.

"I'm sorry I can't offer you the hospitality of the tunnel, but to be perfectly candid, I've emptied the flask."

Rufus was obviously talking to gain time, and waiting for Neil to give him an opening. He was at a disadvantage in that Neil's presence was a mystery to him, whereas his antagonist had solved the problem of the presence of Rufus in the passage.

Neil also awaited an opening—an opening to his attack, for somehow he could not spring upon his man without some ostensible reason. Besides, he wanted to make sure of his

ground. He would not risk a second tragedy.

"So this is why we heard nothing of you for so long?" he said. "You had gone to earth."

"Only in a measure," replied Rufus. "To a man of my mental and bodily activity a week in this rat-hole would be more than the estate is worth. I've had occasion to spend much of my time in Edinburgh, and——"

"I surmised that from these," interrupted Neil, pointing to the cylinders that lay against the wall. "They'd hardly stock gaseous anæsthetics in the general shop in Dorning."

"Ah! You've noticed them, have you?" said Rufus, a dangerous gleam coming into his green eyes. "And you'll have drawn your own conclusions?"

"Well, naturally I don't imagine that you are setting up a painless dentistry business in the bowels of the earth, and I can only see one other object in bringing them here. But I don't see how you can succeed. You'll never get the concentration of gas in the house."

"I disagree with you there, McNeil," said Rufus, perhaps led away by his enthusiasm for his scheme. "I've worked out the cubic capacity of Dorning House as near as may be, and I've got four cubic feet of gas for every cubic foot of space. Even allowing for leakage, that should be enough to keep them all quiet while I throw them out."

"But what about yourself?"

"Surely you've had enough

experience of my general intelligence to know that I'd hardly overlook myself. I've got a mask that will absorb every trace of the gas. Oh, I've been thorough, believe me. Maybe you wonder why I am so free with my secrets?" he went on, moving a step nearer to McNeil. "That, too, should be plain to you. As you've blundered in, and seen as much as you did see, I'll take care you don't blunder out again."

Almost as his words ceased, he aimed a lightning blow at Neil which struck him glancingly upon the cheek as he attempted to dodge it. Though he had not got its full force, apparently the power behind it was sufficient, for Neil dropped to his knees, and fell over upon his side close to Rintoul's legs.

Then the reason of his too easy collapse became apparent. He seized his opponent round the ankles and overbalanced him. As Rufus crashed to the ground, he shouted—

"Fight fair, you dog!"

"Fair be damned!" retorted Neil, as he flung himself upon the fallen man. "This is no time for ceremony."

As Rufus fell, Neil had snatched at the loose blanket that lay upon the ground near by, and as he threw himself upon Rufus he endeavoured to muffle the fiery red head in its folds. He was partially successful in the first attempt, but as Rufus guessed at his intention he struggled with every ounce of his great strength to resist it. He was at a double

disadvantage, however. He had the whole weight of Neil McNeil on top of him, and his sight was already obscured by the blanket.

With a desperate effort Neil freed a hand for an instant and managed to wind a loose end of the blanket in yet another fold across his opponent's face, and then his hand was seized and they were at grips again. In the moving struggle upon the floor, Neil, with the advantage of sight, edged the fight in the direction that he desired, until he was within easy reach of the gas cylinder, which he had observed to have a reducing valve and flexible tube attached.

Though Rintoul's head by now was closely muffled, yet he fought with unabated strength and desperation. Each time Neil wrenched his hand free, Rufus utilised the freedom of his own to aim wild blows at the man on top of him. Many of these flew wide, but some got home on Neil's head, and he was already bleeding freely from a cut above his eye. That did not matter. He never ceased his efforts to envelop Rufus in the folds of the blanket.

Then, careless of how he might suffer, he stretched out his hand for the flexible tube that was now well within his reach. Rufus got in a blow upon his jaw, and then, changing his tactics, seized him by the throat, Neil meanwhile forcing the end of the tube under the folds of the blanket that clung round Rintoul's neck;

The powerful fingers dug into his windpipe so that he could barely draw a gasping breath. The blood sang in his ears, and he felt his eyes starting in their sockets, yet he could not spare a hand to wrench the clutch from his throat. He was straining to reach the valve that would release the gas, risking the whole issue of the fight upon that one effort.

The faint hiss of the gas through the tube told him that he had been so far successful. His only fear now was that he, as well as his intended victim, might be overpowered. He had to trust to the matted fabric of the blanket to hold the gas secluded long enough to anaesthetise Rufus without affecting himself.

His hand was now free to tackle the grip upon his throat, which was almost as deadly to him as was the gas to Rufus. At first he could make no impression upon the steel-like grip, and then to his relief the fingers relaxed and he tore them away. It was a double relief, for it told him that the gas was taking effect, and permitted him to draw a great breath into his lungs.

Rufus grew limp in his arms. Neil had won!

He struggled painfully to his feet and wiped the streaming blood from his eyes. Then, after allowing his victim to inhale the stupefying fumes for a few moments longer to ensure that he was properly unconscious, he shut off the valve.

The open bag had two strong loose straps, and with these he

proceeded to tie Rufus hand and foot. This he did with great care, as he had no wish to make his prisoner suffer unnecessarily, yet he must make certain that there should be no possibility of escape.

It was with a sigh of relief that he rose once more, assured that he had nothing more to fear from Rufus Rintoul. Now he could afford to let him breathe pure air once more. He unwound the blanket and flapped it over the livid face which looked death-like against its frame of red. Gradually a more healthy hue crept into the skin, and quite suddenly Rufus opened his eyes and tried to sit up. His bound wrists and ankles prevented him and he fell back.

"What the devil!" he exclaimed.

He looked up at Neil, and remembered the fight. His recollection ceased with the moment at which he had lost consciousness, and, as is often the case with patients recovering from the effects of nitrous oxide, he had no knowledge of any lapse of time. To him, a moment before he had been struggling with McNeil, and the next moment he was tied helpless, hand and foot.

His puzzlement was plain upon his face, and Neil hastened to make things clear to him.

"I gassed you," he explained. "With your own gas!" he added with a grin.

"I don't remember," said Rufus confusedly. "I—hang it, man, there was no *time*!"

"Time enough for me to tie

you up safely. Now, I'm going to make you as comfortable as I can, for I'll have to leave you for some hours at least. I'm sorry, but it just can't be helped."

Already Rufus Rintoul's mind was working again normally. Though he had no conception of these lapsed moments, he understood what had occurred, and that he was beaten hopelessly.

"That's twice you've bested me, McNeil," he growled with a certain reluctant admiration. "I'm beginning to think my luck's out. What the devil brought you here at the very moment when I was ready to win out?"

"It may lessen your disappointment if I tell you that you certainly wouldn't have succeeded in any case," said Neil.

As he talked he busied himself in arranging for Rintoul's comfort—gathering up loose objects, and spreading the fateful blanket to make, with the addition of the kit-bag, a kind of primitive couch.

"You made some pretty bad blunder in your calculations," he went on. "I was trained as a chemist, and I know that these cylinders wouldn't hold a tenth of the gas necessary to fill Dorning House. Where you've gone wrong I can't say, and I haven't time to go into it now. Perhaps, some other time, you'll let me go through your figures. It would be interesting to know how you've gone wrong."

"That'll be enough humilia-

tion for to-night, thank you," said Rufus bitterly. "If what you say is true, I'm the clumsiest fool on record. I deserve to lose."

Neil dragged him to the couch that he had improvised.

"Honestly, Rintoul, I'm sorry that I've got to leave you tied up like this," he said. "I've got to make the straps good and tight, or you'd work them loose, and I don't know when I'll get back to ease them."

"Why leave me here at all? After the hopeless show I've put up to-night, I'm surprised you bother about me."

"I've a much greater respect for your powers than you seem to think. This isn't the first time we've met, remember, and I've had good cause to dread your ingenuity in the past."

"I thank you for these kind words. In my present state of humiliation I appreciate them. By the way, has it occurred to you that if you should happen to die or get killed, it will be very unpleasant for me here? It will be a lonely death, apart from the unpleasantness of it."

"I'll take care of myself," Neil assured him. "And should anything happen to prevent me getting back, I'll make it known that you are here. What about

the lamp? Shall I leave it burning? It won't last long."

"I might as well have it while it does last, though. I'll have plenty of time in the dark later."

"I won't leave you a moment longer than I can help," said Neil, as he turned towards the steps.

"You're a good chap, McNeil. I bear you no ill-will, but I'm glad to see I got some good ones in on you before I went under. It makes the defeat easier to bear."

Blood still flowed from the cut above Neil's eye, and his face showed marks of other blows. His collar was loose, his clothes disordered and streaked with the dry earth from the floor of the passage, some of which had mingled with the blood upon his face.

Rufus looked at him with some satisfaction.

"You'll want a wash and brush-up before you're fit for the society of my handsome niece. She'll throw a fit if you go to her like that."

"She'll have more important matters to think about than my appearance—which reminds me that I've let you waste too much of my time already."

He turned and climbed the steps that led to Dorning House.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Where is the Signorina? Murdoch is dead. She must get away at once. The police are on their way here."

The five men looked at Neil in dumb distress, all their fears for their mistress confirmed.

"Where is she?" repeated Neil sharply.

"Asleep in the smoking-room" replied Lindsay.

"I'll go to her," said Neil, his voice taking on a tone of command that no one questioned. "Get the cars ready and bring them round to the front. Show no lights. Where are Televant and Owen?"

"There's only one car left. Televant's gone off with the other, God knows where," Lindsay told him. "Owen has drunk himself to sleep."

"That's not like Televant. Something must have happened to him. But with only one car—— Listen, men. The first person to be considered is the Signorina. She must get away, and disappear completely. Force won't help her now, and a bodyguard would only make her more conspicuous. You must scatter, and make your way separately back to London. Make for small towns first. Lie low for a few days, then work your way to the main line. Fortunately few people can describe any of you."

"And the Signorina?" asked several voices.

"I shall try to get her out of the country from Leith. I know a man in the Customs, and with his help I may get her away. None of you could be of any use, or I would ask you to stop."

"I suppose you realise that you are going to make yourself an accessory to the crime?" said Lindsay, the ex-solicitor. "After the treatment you've had, it's devilish sporting of you."

"Nonsense. The Signorina must be got clear, and I know local conditions better than any of you. Give me the lamp. I must break it to her, and that is the most damnable part of the whole affair."

"For Heaven's sake, don't let her see you as you are now. How did you get into that state?"

Neil took the lamp from Lindsay, and, holding it high, looked at himself in a wall-mirror.

"Gad, I am in a mess! There's no time to tell you anything. I had a scrap with Rufus Rintoul. Now, get the car round. I'll clean up a bit, and then break the news to the Signorina."

As he stood, a few minutes later, looking down at the pale beautiful face of Francesca, that in sleep appeared so calm and trouble-free, Neil could hardly bear to rouse her to reality. Yet it had to be done.

She awoke at a touch and looked up at him, for a moment in astonishment and with a hint of anger in her eyes, and then with a sudden realisation that his presence foreboded ill.

"Major McNeil! You here!" she exclaimed, rising hastily from the couch. "What does it mean?"

"I'm afraid, Signorina, that it means very bad news," said Neil gently. "You must get away from here at once."

"He is——?"

She did not dare to speak the word.

"Yes; he is dead," said

Neil. "I have come to get you away. There is no time to waste."

Without a word Francesca threw her arms about his neck, and, burying her face in his shoulder, sobbed wildly. Neil did what he could to soothe her, but it was some time before she was sufficiently composed to listen to his instructions. When at last he prevailed upon her to dry her eyes, she stood before him, subdued and submissive to his will, her high passion quenched by the enormity of what she had done.

"Get together what you need quickly," Neil instructed her. "Take the least that you can do with, and wear plain inconspicuous clothes. You must attract as little attention as possible wherever we go. You have plenty of ready money to pay the others before they disappear?"

"Money? Give them what you will."

She walked to an unlocked drawer in an *escritoire* and drew it open. It was full of notes, thrown in anyhow.

"Take it all, Major McNeil," she said, in her dull broken-spirited voice. "You must act for me. Now I will go to my room."

As she moved tragically towards the door, her whole person eloquent of misery, a sudden fear crossed Neil's mind.

"Signorina—promise me that you will come back," he cried.

Francesca paused and looked at him uncomprehendingly.

"I mean, you will not take

your punishment into your own hands?"

"Kill myself? No! I might have done so after I had seen him on the ground, my stiletto in his heart. Now—I have no longer the courage. I will do whatever you tell me. While I am gone, will you find Honourable Owen and warn him to be ready?"

"Owen? He can scatter with the rest, and find his way back to London. I'll give him his instructions."

"No, no! I must have him with me. I will not be left alone after you have put me in safety."

"But, Signorina, I hope to smuggle you across from Leith to Hamburg, or to some Scandinavian port."

"Therefore will I need his support the more."

"But, hang it, you can't roam about the Continent with a man, Signorina. It wouldn't do. You would compromise yourself."

"Perhaps you are right," agreed Francesca. "Then I will marry him, and no one will mind."

"But——"

"Let me have my way in this, Major McNeil," she begged. "And I will be very obedient in everything else. You'll no' be hard on me?"

Neil shrugged his shoulders.

"Have it as you wish," he said. "I'll find him and hurry him up, and you must lose no time, Signorina, for there is little enough of it to spare."

As Francesca went off to prepare for the journey, Neil

turned to the open drawer and sorted out the notes. He was amazed that even Francesca could be so careless of money. The sum in the drawer was sufficient to pay all the men handsomely, and leave enough for whatever bribery might be required to get the fugitives out of the country.

He heard the car draw up at the door, and went out to find the five men waiting about restlessly in the hall. Having settled with them all financially, he turned to go in search of Bubbly, when a fresh idea occurred to him.

"Which of you will lay a false scent for the Signorina?" he asked, turning back to the melancholy group.

"I will," answered each of the five.

"We mustn't overdo it, or it would defeat its own purpose," said Neil. "I'll take you, Lindsay. You will come with us in the car. There will be plenty of time once we are clear of Dornig. We mustn't arrive in Leith until a reasonable hour in the morning. In the meantime I'll take you close to Haddington. You will have a bag with the Signorina's name on it—she has it plastered over everything,—full of her own things, too, and you can leave it somewhere in Haddington Station in the early morning. Then clear off by train—anywhere."

"I'll do it," said Lindsay quietly.

"Good man," said Neil, and went off to find Bubbly.

He found him in a heavy sleep, from which it was difficult to rouse him, and when at last he was awake his brain was not at its best.

"Come on, Bubbly; shove your head under the tap," said Neil, shaking him to and fro by the shoulders. "You want all your wits about you."

He waited while Owen took his hint. The cold water was sufficiently sobering in its effect to make Owen wonder at Neil's presence.

"I came to save the Signorina," explained Neil. "Murdoch is dead, and she must clear out before the police get here. You are coming with us, and the others will make their escape separately."

"Why can't I escape on my own, too?" asked Bubbly tremulously, his face pale and frightened. "I don't want to be mixed up with murder. God! Who would have thought it would come to this!"

"You are a miserable little devil, Bubbly, with about as much guts in you as a rabbit," said Neil disgustedly. "But you are coming with us because the Signorina wants you, and I promised she could have you. She won't go abroad all alone."

"But—but, hang it, Neil, she can't take me abroad with her. It wouldn't do. People would talk."

"That's all right. She's going to marry you and make an honest man of you. You needn't worry about your reputation."

"Marry me? God forbid! I won't do it, I tell you."

Trembling all over his meagre body, Bubbly held out palsied hands beseechingly.

"That's a matter between yourselves. But go you shall. I thought you were devoted to her, man?"

"I was. I admit I was, but—but I never thought of myself as her husband. Neil—I couldn't call my soul my own, and now that she's a—a murderess—save me, Neil, for old time's sake!"

"You don't need to marry her if you don't want to, but you've got to stand by her."

"If she wants me, I shan't stand a dog's chance of getting out of it, and I'll lead a dog's life ever after. She's too strong for me, Neil."

"You brought it on yourself, so you can put up with the consequences," said Neil unsympathetically. "Buck up. Put what you actually need together. The car's at the door."

He found Francesca in the hall, taking a melancholy and embarrassed farewell of her five adorers. Two bags stood near by, Lindsay having seen to the packing of the second, designed as a false clue.

"You had better be getting aboard, Signorina," said Neil.

He was bending to pick up the bags, when an interruption occurred. Ronald Aitken, whom every one had completely forgotten, appeared in the hall, his little shrivelled body guarding the door.

"Ye'll no' leave this hoose the nicht, wuman," he said bravely. "Ye've shed the bluid o' the innocent, an' ye maun

juist bide till the vengeance o' the Lord owertak's ye."

"Stand aside, Ronald," said Neil sharply. "Who are you, to say who is to come or go in the house?"

"D'ye think I dinna ken what she's dune? She's murdered the meenister, the soondrest preacher in East Lothian, an' ye'd ha'e me stan' by an' see her escape frae the polis, an' me an elder? Na, na—no' Ronald Aitken."

"This is ridiculous, Ronald," protested Neil with some irritation. "I don't want to use force to a man of your years, but if you don't move I shall have to. Remember there's such a thing as mercy as well as justice. What about 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord'?"

"Ay, an' man is the humble instrument that the Lord mak's use o' tae see that it's cairried oot," retorted Ronald dogmatically.

"We have no time to argue. Remove him as gently as possible, Lindsay," ordered Neil.

Ronald made no attempt at resistance. His protest was in reality a formal one, intended to clear his own conscience from all complicity in the flight. He had never had a thought that his interference would have any effect.

The bags were loaded into the car, Francesca took her seat, and the miserable Bubbly, who had put in a belated appearance, had followed her meekly, when Neil caused a further delay by running back into the house.

Rufus Rintoul was much upon his mind, and he determined to do what little he could for his prisoner's comfort before he left. On the sideboard in the dining-room he found a carafe of water. Seizing this in his hand, he pushed back the secret panel and hurried down the steps. The acetylene lamp still burnt brightly, and Rufus lay as he had been left.

"Has your conscience pricked you, McNeil?" he asked. "I sincerely hope it has, for it's devilish uncomfortable lying here trussed like a fowl, besides the monotony of it."

"I can't release you, but I've brought you a drink."

He raised Rintoul's head and let him drink his fill of water.

"It's a poor thin drink," said Rufus as he lay back once more against the kit-bag. "Look here, McNeil—what's going on? There's something that I'm ignorant of, and apparently it's something desperate."

"It is," admitted Neil. "But I can't tell you now. I must go at once."

"I never thought I'd be so glad to see you as I'll be when you get back."

Neil was already half-way up the steps. He closed the panel carefully, and returned to the hall, where he found old Ronald Aitken wandering restlessly. On the impulse of the moment Neil stopped.

"I can trust to your discretion, Ronald?" he asked. "You can keep a secret?"

"Ay, gin it suits me," replied the old man cautiously.

Neil hesitated for a moment, then quickly decided that he could trust the butler.

"Look here, Ronald, I've got a prisoner in the secret passage. I don't want you to know that, or go near the place, but if I shouldn't turn up in twenty-four hours, I'd like to think that some one would see that he didn't starve to death."

"What about ma trust frae the deid Laird?" asked Ronald doubtfully.

"Think for yourself, man. If you interfere with my prisoner, you will break your trust, because you will be helping one competitor and spoiling the chance of another."

"I see hoo the wind blows noo," said Ronald, nodding his head shrewdly. "Ye can trust me. I'll no' let him dee, but itherwise I'll juist let him slip ma mind."

Satisfied that Rufus should not now suffer through any accident to himself, Neil hurried to the waiting car. Lindsay was in front next to the driver's seat, Francesca and Bubbly hidden in the gloom of the covered tonneau.

Neil clambered in, started the engine, and drove off into the night.

Dorning House was once more vacant.

(To be concluded.)

UNTEMPERED STEEL.

BY JAN GORDON.

BROTHER HILARION, a man thirty years of age, with a pointed nose, high cheek-bones, and light-blue eyes surrounded by pale lashes, stood, with sixty fellow-members of his monastery, listening to the words of the Father Superior. It was night-time. The faint breeze which drifted in through the small and highly-set windows of the refectory felt and smelt as though it had come across a plain of red-hot iron. The monks, oppressed by the heat, shrugged their bodies beneath the rough wool of their vestures. In the mental atmosphere of the refectory there was, mingled with the apathy induced by the heat, a feeling of subdued fright, of desperation: the atmosphere which sometimes stings a man to acts of great heroism in the effort to escape the sense of nerveless fear which threatens to subdue his soul.

This panic pluck was gripping Brother Hilarion. He wanted to cry out that he felt no fear, that disease and death were tests to invite, not evils to shun. He wanted to interrupt the self-satisfied voice of the Father Superior. The yellow lights of the swinging lamps, from which exuded a smell of heated olive-oil, gave to the faces of the monks a jaundiced look, while the usu-

ally pale face of the Father Superior in the illumination of the largest lamp reflected a glow as yellow and as ghastly as though he were a corpse of one dead of the Jamaica fever.

Brother Hilarion wanted to stop all this talk about the plague which was now devastating the city. He did not want to talk; the passion in him was to act. Every evening they had been talking thus for a full two weeks: words, words; and nothing had ensued, like the frantic efforts of an insect caught in syrup.

"And now we have decided," said the Father Superior's voice—"Aha," thought Hilarion, "something is decided then,"—"since the plague is communicated only by touch, and since no member of the Monastery has yet been infected, that we shall lock ourselves within our gates, permitting none to enter or sally out until the scourge has been lifted. We have provision of corn, wine, oil, and meat for a full year; thus will we escape the plague."

A murmur began to be audible. A tall monk with a red rag of hair about his tonsure thrust out a protesting hand.

"But," went on the Father Superior, in his turn lifting up a hand, colourless save for the light of the lamp, "it is

necessary that in this city of infidels the faithful should not suffer from our precautions. One of us"—he hesitated—"chosen by—chosen by lot, shall be stationed in the little chapel without the gates, to attend to the duties of the Church, and to give consolation to the sick. He will have no communication with the inside, except that every morning he must ring the bell to advise us that he is capable of doing his duty. Every day food will be supplied to him. Should he fall another must take his place, chosen as was he——"

The impulse struggled in Hilarion to cry out that he would go, that chance was a sorry method—but the Father Superior was still speaking.

"—A measure which will affect all of us. We wish to say that any one of you is permitted frankly to speak his mind on the subject without fear."

The red-haired monk shouldered his way forward.

"It seems to me a poor thing," he cried, emotion choking his voice, "when God's ministers cower behind locked doors for fear of one of His pestilences. Why should we take advantage of our position to shun a common danger? We are a small body upholding our faith in an unbelieving land, and the heretics will make a mock of us. Prejudice will thus come to our religion. Do not lock our doors, I say: fling them open. Call in the sick; give them our gardens;

let them rest by our cistern beneath the date-palms."

A small percentage of the monks murmured assent to the words spoken. Hilarion felt an impulse to push forward, and to place himself beside the speaker. But he was surrounded by a group of self-indulgent fellows, who were looking angrily at the red-headed Aloysius. He heard the word "fanatic" murmured by more than one of the group.

There were many such in the monastery: some had chosen the monkish life as a refuge from life itself; others had been entered by religious parents. Hilarion felt that if he tried to push his way past them they might try to prevent him—that an unpleasant altercation might arise. Before he had come to a decision the Father Superior was answering.

"Hot heart always dubs the precaution of cool brain, cowardice, Aloysius," said he. "After a shipwreck on the wide sea, or in a beleaguered city, one does not at once eat up all the provender which remains. It is portioned out, that life may be sustained until the last moment. Thus we do. The plague is striking heavily. Once it enters here, how many will survive at the end of the month? Perhaps not one. Thus we do but portion out to the believers the aid which is necessary for them, exposing not more than one at any moment."

There was perhaps reason in his words; but man is ever trying to rationalise his acts, and most of all does he need to rationalise his fears. Aloysius caught a hint of this.

"But who are we to calculate upon the acts of God?" he cried. "If He wishes He will call for us as He did for the rich man. If His work is to be done by us He will spare us. Who are we to thrust our petty human precautions into the face of His omnipotence?"

The fat and languid monks began to cry out.

"The Father Superior is ever wise," they clamoured. "Who are you to judge better than he? Each can take his own part. Who cries coward? The man who dashes into danger is often as great a coward as he who runs away. Peace, red-head! Silence, fanatic!"

The Father Superior, smiling, stilled the tumult with his white hand.

"There is a taint of heresy in your speech, Aloysius," he said. "Indeed, the unbelieving Turk who rules the great city might well concur with your words. God will, of course, choose out whom He wants; but man has an intelligence given to him so that he may in some part direct his own acts. One does not step over a cliff-edge trusting in God's mercy. That is the act of a madman. One turns aside."

Aloysius threw up his hands with a gesture of impatient despair.

Hilarion hitherto had never

felt an overwhelming passion for his duties. Entered for the religious life by devout parents of moderate means, he had settled into monkish habits as a matter of course, allowing the years to flow by, satisfied that his work was part of a necessary calling. He had not distinguished himself by learning nor by activity, nor indeed as had some of his brothers by gluttony. A moderate talent for painting enabled him to carry out part of the decorations of the church. He had found intense pleasure in laying paint on to the fresh stucco, or in handling the delicate leaves of beaten gold. But he had never become expert enough to paint hands or heads or work upon any important part of a picture.

His sudden passion for self-sacrifice surprised him. He felt that he and Aloysius alone of these perspiring monks had in them some of that pure courage which makes the martyrs. It gave him a glimpse into a broader vista of life. Conjointly with it came a desire to express himself. If he could only paint, he felt that out of the anger of Aloysius he could have created something great in art. He could paint a martyr. But, alas! he could not draw. The keen desire of sacrifice gradually spent itself in the desire of creation; and this in turn faded into a feeling of incompetence. Conscious of the change, he tried to struggle back to his first enthusiasm, but could call up no more than a

sense of forced and bombastic vanity.

"If I am chosen they will see how I can face death."

"Send me," Aloysius had cried to the Father Superior; "I will go. I have no wish to crouch behind locked gates."

"No, Aloysius," replied the Father Superior. "We cannot usurp God's will to choose those who shall do His service. That were indeed presumption."

"How, then, will you choose?" cried the red-head.

"Chance is the ruling of God," answered the other. "We will leave the decision to Him. In the archives we have the golden dice presented by the late Brother Clemente when he turned from his career of soldier and of turbulent. With these we will test the will of God. I take my part with the rest. After the evening meal we will choose out the minister to this stricken city by means of the golden dice."

Hilarion left the refectory, surrounded by a murmuring crowd of monks, who were discussing the new decision. Snatches of conversation jarred on his mood, and he wished to beat those tonsured heads together, to shout to them to be silent.

"Only by touch," he heard, "contagion only, so we will be safe; plenty to eat for a year, and for fresh meat—poultry. Killing hundreds a day—so many lie unburied that the city stinks. They say that the governor has run away.

Sixty to one chance—a good game."

All was materialistic; it sickened him.

He turned into a wide corridor, and by a small heavy door which, turning on its hinges, groaned as though in sympathy with his soul, he came out into the monastery garden. The irregular block of buildings stood on the crest of a hill, and the gardens—dim in the darkness, which for all its blue was not cool—dropped down the slope in terraces. The orange-trees appeared black masses, but the olives had lightened in tint, looking like the ghosts of trees amongst their darker fellows.

In the faint heated breeze the fronds of the date-palm whispered as they rubbed together; one could almost imagine that they were whispering memories of the dead monks who had loitered beneath them. So too, perhaps, they would be whispering of him in a short while.

The monastery wall looped down the hillside like an ebony necklace over the breast of Mother Earth. Beyond the walls the city showed against the landscape, only by means of a few sparkles of light and because of the minarets. In the daytime it looked not unlike a giant carpet, faded and worn, with ragged edges, cast down on the hills. A sound of wailing rose into the night, Rachel weeping for her children.

Suddenly Hilarion conceived

that the sibilant rustle of the date-palms had a sinister note, that through the distant sounds of human grief the whisper of the leaves was unsympathetic, remote from man. Some heretics, he had heard, held that nature had a conscious essence. Perhaps these palms could rejoice because man was dying; perhaps there was a sneer in their voices.

"You may sneer," he muttered, "but for all your sneering nothing conquers man. I may die, and you may whisper on. But out of man comes the eternal, which is God's."

As he said the words he knew that he was being theatrical and false. It was as though a part of him stepped aside to watch his other part. He sat down on a stone bench and leaned his chin on clenched hands, an attitude which he felt was also theatrical. But at that moment there was no action at which his critical half would not have sneered. He was too conscious to be natural.

Down there in the city he

knew that the dead were lying unburied. The terrible plague was handed on by touch (so they said), and every man shunned contact with his fellow; few were great-hearted enough to bury their relatives. Instead of the customary jostling crowds each man walked distrustful and alone. Only sometimes an incorrigible joker would slap a slinking fellow on the shoulder, crying out, "Now, you have it also."

The rogues of the city, sure that no policemen would dare to arrest them, robbed and murdered at their ease—thus adding to the death-roll,—and were in turn shot at by the police officials, who were bad marksmen. In the food-shops the purchaser dropped his coins into the bowls of vinegar, paying whatever price was asked, without bargaining. The bakers had hired a band of bravoës to defend their shops. Law having been nullified by the fact that no man would touch another save under compulsion, anarchy had been given full licence.

II.

The refectory bell called Hilarion to supper, but for a while he did not move. He felt a distaste of the oil-smelling dining-room and of the overheated brethren. But soon he reflected that his absence might be ascribed to fear.

There was a broad silence in the room, broken only by

the clatter of knives and of forks and the sound of the monks' mastication, for many were of lowly parentage, and ate with more gusto than elegance. To-night the noise was less than ordinary. Most of the monks had as little appetite as had Hilarion. This fact was strange, for during the past

days of the plague they had all gone about their duties as a matter of course, nor had the imminence of danger disturbed their meal-times. Yet now that they were shutting themselves off, leaving for themselves but a chance of one in sixty to face a danger which before had been faced by all with comparative composure, appetite had deserted them. But the flagons of rich browned wine, flavoured with mastic, passed more rapidly than usual. At last, with feelings of relief mixed with tremors of fear, all saw the meal draw to its close. The long table was cleared.

Hilarion looked around at the faces of his fellow-monks. The lights falling steeply sank all the eye-sockets deep into shadow, and emphasised the nose in a grotesque fashion: hawk noses with the light glistening from the bridge, snub noses reddened with toping, long noses, pointed noses, broken noses, noses which looked as though thumbed out by a careless sculptor, noses which seemed to be carefully chiselled from finest ivory,—all these noses were thrust out over the table, beneath the mysterious caverns of the eyes. Hilarion was in that mood of nerveless anxiety when the mind will only play with trivial detail. Suddenly all these noses turned, pointing towards the head of the table. One or two of the owners rose unconsciously in their seats. The Father Superior had come in

with the dice. He placed the box on the long table.

"Since it is not ill but good fortune to go out to succour those in distress, even if at the risk of life, the winner shall be the one chosen—he who throws the highest number. If there are equals they throw again until one is left."

He took up the dice-box, made a sign of the cross over it, and murmuring, "*In Manus tuas Domine*," threw the dice on to the polished table. Hilarion's heart, from an almost strangulated stillness, gave a great leap. With a simultaneous movement all the monks craned forward.

"Seven," ejaculated the Father Superior with an unconscious sigh, which plainly expressed the tension from which he had been suffering. He was after all but human.

"A five and a two, a good cast," murmured the nearest monks.

"Seven is a lucky number," said the monk who was Hilarion's neighbour.

Hilarion's unruly heart beat a clanging note as the dice-box crept down the table towards him. As monk after monk rattled the box and threw, an intense silence reigned, broken only by gasps and sighs. In the silence Hilarion imagined that everybody must be able to hear his heart beating. His face flamed red, burning with shame. By some freak of chance the throws were low. For sixteen

casts not one was above a double three.

"Look at the Father," muttered one of the fortunate players to his neighbour. "He doesn't want to be a martyr."

The Father Superior's face was more blanched than usual. Though by now the dice were too far away for him to read the pips, he had half risen from his chair. As each throw was made he called out in a sharp voice, "What's the throw; what is it?"

The dice-box reached Hilarion's neighbour. In Hilarion's ears the blood was now pulsing so powerfully that it was like the beating of a brass gong. The neighbour threw a pair of ones, puffed out a sigh of relief, sank again to his seat, and handed the box to Hilarion. The latter's fingers were so nerveless that he could with difficulty pick up the dice from the table. His hand trembled, and the dice rattled in the box without his volition. He tried to still this shudder, but it was stronger than he. The others would be sneering at him, he thought, and suddenly turned the box down on to the table. He did this so abruptly that one of the dice rolled to the far edge of the board, where it trembled for a moment as though about to fall over. The dice nearest to him showed a six. He could not breathe; the pips on the far dice he could not see.

"Two," called out the monk nearest to whom it had settled.

"Eight," cried out the Father

Superior with a cracked voice, sinking into his seat.

Hilarion put his finger to his neck-band and pulled it looser. Why was the room so stuffy? He had thrown the highest. Well, they would see with what courage he would go.

His neighbour, a red-faced monk named Johannes, took from him the dice-box, which he still was clasping. He was a cheery fellow with a rich bass voice in which he took great pride, for ever trolling out snatches of chant as an ordinary human trolls out a drinking song.

"*In Manus tuas Domine*," said Johannes, and threw.

"Eleven," he cried. "Eleven. Thy will be done, O Lord!" With a rough sleeve Johannes wiped away the drops of perspiration which had started from his forehead. Hilarion felt as though the room had swung around him, and suddenly had settled back with a jerk. The blood rushed to his face. He stared at his tremulous hands. Why had they become so nerveless; why had his heart been so mutinous? He had not been unwilling to go, yet a weakness of his flesh had betrayed him. Why should the flesh be able to triumph over the will of man? When he said "Yes"! could his flesh say "No"?

By his side Johannes was rumbling a chant beneath his breath. Hilarion, marvelling at the weakness of his own will, wondered at the composure of the fat monk, ignorant that he

too was but clothing his anxiety with an ancient habit. Suddenly Johannes stopped his rumbling.

"Phew! How hot it is," he ejaculated, again wiped his forehead, and once more turned into the old chant.

Hilarion began to note that not only he was weak of flesh. The monks were but ordinary human beings; many rattled the dice too vigorously, and many of the hands stretched out for the golden cubes were trembling. Now the throws ruled higher, but for some while Johannes' eleven was unbeaten. Brother Aloysius threw a pair of ones.

"It should have been the lowest," he snarled out.

"God has not chosen you, Aloysius," said the Father Superior with malice. Aloysius, with his superfluous zeal, was an irritant to him.

Then a sickly pallid monk threw eleven.

Johannes stopped his humming.

"You or I, Ambrosius," he murmured.

Another eleven fell to a burly monk with a flattened nose. When he read the count he banged the table with his fist.

"There isn't a double six in the box," growled Johannes.

When the full circle of the table had been completed, he sighed, and rubbed his fat fingers together.

"One shall be taken," he muttered.

The burly monk stretched out his hand, took the dice-box once more, shook it vigorously, and thumped it down. Johannes leaned forward.

"Pick up the box," he cried.

The burly man plucked up the box, and disclosed a cast of nine. The pale man threw five. Johannes had again begun to hum. Hilarion marvelled yet more, not knowing that beneath the apparent calm Johannes' nerves were spanned tight. The monks held their breathing, listening only to the drone of the chant and to the prolonged rattle of the dice-box. Johannes, as if reluctant to finish with doubt, shook the dice for a long while. Suddenly Hilarion saw that it was a dreadful and terrible thing thus to play for life. He felt sick. He wished that Johannes would throw.

As Johannes cast the dice Hilarion cried out loudly, but neither he nor the others were aware that the silence had been broken, so concentrated were they all on one thing, the cast.

"Eight," cried out Johannes in a loud voice, dropped back into his chair, and fainted.

The burly monk stood up and shook himself within his habit. He gazed down on Johannes, who lay crumpled in his chair.

"Brother Eugenius, God has chosen you," whispered the Father Superior. The excitement passed through had robbed him of his voice.

Brother Eugenius made a

rough gesture of assent. His comrades gazed with compassion and admiration at this man who was going out to face the danger which but yesterday they had confronted without dismay. But they could not find in themselves the courage which they now admired in him. The very fact of their self-imposed immolation revealed this courage, normal enough in a group, as something wonderful when shown in solitude.

Hilarion rose to his feet. He was surprised to find that his knees were as tremulous as had been his fingers. He now understood the Psalmist whose "bones had run to water." With a hand on the wall he made his way carefully to the garden, and dropped on to the stone bench.

The night was now quite dark. Even the minarets were invisible.

He tried to analyse the mys-

tery of his weakness. He was sure that he did not fear death. Without a qualm he could picture himself stretched out on a pallet. He could imagine the hues of death creeping over his face. Had a volunteer been called for he would have stepped up side by side with Aloysius. Maybe the heat of the refectory had upset him. Indeed he still felt ill and faint. Maybe he had the plague. But this thought gave him no tremor. On the contrary, he could almost smile at the idea of the baffled precautions of the Father Superior. He could laugh at the horror of the self-indulgent monks. But no! It would be more noble to step outside the monastery, to minister to the sick until death overtook him.

He sat for a while toying luxuriously with imaginations of death. Presently his thoughts became incoherent: two or three times he dozed.

III.

A small chapel, a companionable hermitage, had been built some paces from the chief entrance of the monastery, and in this Brother Eugenius, having carried out a mattress, a water-bottle, and a few other necessities, had taken his abode.

His departure was celebrated by a solemn festival as befitted the act, after which a period of monotony settled on the self-made prisoners within the walls. There was but one

thing to live for: the sound of the portal bell which Eugenius was to ring every morning to signal that he lived.

The Father Superior, for fear of any possible contamination, had forbidden any communication between inside and out, and Eugenius had taken with him money sufficient for his needs for a month, for the Superior finally had decided that even the act of placing out a daily dish of food

was to invite unnecessary danger.

One morning the monks waited for the accustomed signal which Eugenius rang at about six o'clock. Time dragged on till six-thirty, and still the bell hung silent.

"Brother Eugenius is dead," they whispered one to another with tremors in their voices. "Eugenius is dead; who is next?"

From six-thirty till seven the monks clustered beneath the bell watching its lightest movement. "Who next?" they muttered. Those who had duties to fulfil crept about depressed and silent, each asking himself the fearful question. At a quarter past seven, when all hope had been abandoned, the mournful silence was broken by a harsh clanging. Amazed, the monks stood for a moment thunderstruck. Then the first relief of the reprieve rushed upon them. Eugenius yet lived. Brother fell on the neck of Brother weeping with joy.

After the spasm had passed all their joy became soured, and began to be vented in rage upon the absent Eugenius.

"How could he dare to oversleep himself in that way? He might have had more consideration for his Brothers' feelings." A week later the bell again did not sound at its accustomed hour.

"Brother Eugenius," said the monks, "always was a heavy sleeper. But it shows a lack of delicacy."

But seven passed and eight, and gradually the monks understood that the sleep of Eugenius would never pass. The dreadful silence stole through the monastery corridors; yet as late as midday there were monks who hoped on dejectedly, fighting against a belief which they would not admit.

Once more the gamble of life and death had to be played out to its sinister end.

But the Father Superior had judged that the strain on the nerves of the brethren would be lesser in the daylight. Night, "which chases out the walls," was too stimulating to morbid fancies. And so the game took place after the midday meal. Through the high narrow windows the sun—which made the whole city appear to tremble at his power—shot long shafts of rigid silver across the dancing motes in the refectory.

This time Hilarion found that his nerves were under better control. Chance passed him by. Again Aloysius threw a pair of ones. He cast down the dice-box with such fury that it sprang off the table with a hollow noise. The choice fell on a monk named Honorius, who was better known for his fondness for the table than for his courage or devotion. But to Hilarion's amazement the Brother accepted his fate with a jest.

"Only let me take out enough wine for a mortal to drink," he said to the cellarman. "It's

thirsty weather, and wine cures all things."

The hot summer dragged its interminable days along as though Father Time were tired of keeping the planets awlirl. On the mornings when the signal-bell was dumb it was as though Time, exhausted, were about to resign his tedious duties and to hand them over to changeless eternity.

Monk after monk passed out to his fate, and of him nothing more was known until the dreaded morning muteness told a silent tale of tragedy in solitude.

Though the city lay but a short hillside beyond the monastery walls, it might have been a continent away for all the news which penetrated; though rumours, born from trivial beginnings, swelled into important and authentic lies which many believed. The plague was growing—the plague was dying—the Turks had sent an army which was massacring all the inhabitants to prevent the plague from spreading to other cities—the mad English had sent five hundred doctors to cure the plague, and so on.

But all that in truth was known, was that the muezzin still cried out with agonised voice to flaming dawn and bloody sunset; that the wailing, now louder, now more soft, never ceased; that the crows which rose from the city at the muezzin's cry increased daily in numbers. The city itself gave no sign. God looked

down with pitiless face from out of a sky of hard unrelenting blue.

In contrast with life's monotony in the monastery, moods swung about from day to day like summer winds at sea. At first there had been a general feeling of relief, not unmixed with self-accusation of cowardice; but as days went on leaving in doubt the fate of the morrow, nerves became highly strung. Excitement stimulated by false rumours would be followed by days of depression, in which the monks hated the sight of one another. Each knowing the fear hidden in his heart, believed that its presence was obvious to his fellows, and vented on them the hate and shame which in reality he felt for himself. They were, of course, neither more nor less courageous than any other average body of men. Much of the fear which tortured them was the gregarious fear born of the conditions which they had imposed upon themselves; for each—coward though he thought himself in his soul,—when the golden dice plucked him out from his fellows, went to face his fate, trembling, perhaps, but faithful to his duty.

Only one, Ambrosius, broke down under the strain. He was a sickly man, having suffered from consumption for some years, and had been indeed for some while under sentence of death. He had given more belief to each new

rumour than any of his fellows, and the succession of disappointments as each proved its falsity tortured him. In the gaming, too, luck had pursued him with a tantalising irony. He had cast perhaps more high numbers than any other, yet always at the final moment was reprieved. One night he was again the last in the game opposed to a brother named Dominicus. Though Dominicus threw the higher number, Ambrosius persuaded himself that he had been chosen. He tried to leave the monastery by the main gate, but was restrained. He preached a sermon half inspired, half blasphemous, in the garden. Then, with almost superhuman strength, wresting himself free from those who would have held him, ran down the terraces to the walls. Shouting out that the city had called him, he clambered to the top and flung himself over. Beneath was a deep ravine, and he was killed instantly.

A nucleus remained apparently unmoved by the suspense, one or two jolly fellows whom nothing could disturb; and if one of these was chosen he went out with a laugh. There were one or two dullards of whom the imagination could not be stirred: there was Aloysius, who remained always the red-headed fanatic, and there was Hilarion.

Hilarion felt a supreme self-confidence. After that first night in the garden and his communion, he thought that

however much his flesh might tremble, he was master of his soul. It is true that for some while he did not conquer his tremors whenever his turn came to throw the dice, but he persuaded himself that this was on account of excitement. In time custom took the edge even from them. After the tenth monk had passed out he was almost as inured as the most desperate gambler playing for a high stake. He felt himself superior to the nerve-jangled brethren. But he acknowledged the spiritual superiority of Aloysius. He revered him. To the other monks the red-headed man was an object of intense hatred.

One day he met Aloysius in the garden. For some time he had been wishing to speak with him, but the opportunity had not offered.

"Aloysius," he exclaimed, "let me speak to you. It is difficult to express what I would say; but I respect you as a hero, as a would-be martyr. I revere you, yes! I respect you, because I have the same ideas as yourself. I too hate to be thus cloistered away from a danger which all should face in common."

Aloysius listened to him frowning. For a while the red-headed man did not reply, but stared at Hilarion with a keen eye and hardened mouth. The face of Aloysius had that relentlessness which can be best seen in the bust of Julius Cæsar. Hilarion suddenly felt that he had come in con-

tact with something more impenetrable than he had before touched. He was suddenly ashamed of his words.

"Ambrosius jumped over the wall," said Aloysius abruptly, turned on his heel, and walked away.

What did he mean? Ambrosius was mad; but what connection did Aloysius see between Ambrosius and Hilarion, or between Ambrosius and himself? Hilarion pondered over the sentence for a while; then finding no meaning in it, came to a tentative conclusion that Aloysius might be planning to escape. Was it a hint? What should he do? Perhaps he had better temporise; and if Aloysius made any further advances he could consider it more seriously.

The fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth monk passed out, and still the plague was raging. Once more came the dreaded morning silence, and the forty-four remaining brethren faced one another across the long table. The dice-box gave out its fatal rattle like the death-signal of the dreaded snake of the Indies. Whom would it strike now?

When it was his turn, Aloysius picked up the dice-box with the air of a man wearied by a foolish mummery, and tossed the dice on to the table. He had played almost unceasingly with very bad luck. In secret the monks jeered at his pretensions.

"Double six," cried out Aloysius in a loud voice of triumph.

The other monks cast languidly. For some reason, probably because the dice were not quite evenly weighted, not having been made for play, double sixes were rare in comparison with the other possible casts. Most present felt sure that Aloysius was at last going, and most were glad to be rid of him.

Hilarion threw as carelessly as had the rest. One dice fell dead, a six. The other hovered for a moment on a corner, and settled down—a six also.

Hilarion's heart gave a sudden leap, and then seemed to stop. He glared at the sixes, as did all the other monks. This was the first time in sixteen games that two double sixes had been thrown. A mist rose up before his eyes, and in it all the faces of his fellows appeared strange and distorted; he felt as though he could not breathe. Then the shock passed, and he recovered some command of himself. His neighbour was now rattling the box. Aloysius was glaring at him with a cold fury.

At last the dice-box completed the full circle. The Father Superior handed it to Aloysius.

"Father," cried Aloysius, "why should we try again? Two double sixes have fallen for the first time. It is proper perhaps that both of us should go out."

Though taken by surprise, Hilarion, who was unable to

speaking, nodded an assent. At that moment the suggestion of Aloysius was very welcome to him. But the Father Superior shook his head.

"No, Aloysius," he answered; "we must be as sparing of ourselves as possible. We do not know how long the plague may run. We recognise your zeal, but two are too many where one can do the work. You must make the choice between you."

Aloysius flung the dice on to the table.

"Eight," he ejaculated.

Hilarion took the box. He remembered that eight had been his cast on the night when the dreadful game had been initiated. Once more his hand trembled, so that the dice rattled in the box. Like Johannes on that night, he clung to the box for some while. Then he threw.

"Ten."

"Brother Hilarion has been chosen," said the Father Superior in a deep voice.

When a man is caught by a great wave he does not at once feel despair, but is overwhelmed by the force of the movement which has enclosed him. So Hilarion felt. But presently the feeling of helplessness left him, and a kind of vanity took its place. He

had been chosen rather than Aloysius. Into his mind ran an old saying heard in his youth, "*Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant.*" Remembering, however, his ritual, he crossed himself, murmuring, "*In Manus tuas Domine.*"

One by one the monks came to him, murmuring God-speed, shaking his hand. With them came Aloysius: his disappointment lent him a bad grace. Hilarion tried to get from him some enlightenment as to the sentence which had so puzzled him.

"And Ambrosius, Brother," he asked, "what of him?"

Aloysius stared at him in wonder. Then he remembered his words in the garden. Again he seemed to bore into Hilarion's heart with his eyes. Again he answered enigmatically.

"You will know at cock-crow," he said. "But—forgive me, Brother; perhaps I am wrong."

Hilarion, pondering over these words also, suddenly saw a possible connection: Aloysius was meaning to leave the monastery, and would join him at dawn. Together they would fight the terrible disease which was crouching like a great beast over the city.

IV.

Hilarion stood outside the doors of the monastery, which had shut behind him with

a clang. He was still elated by the feeling of pride induced by the leave-takings

and by the adulation of the brethren.

From the heights he looked down on the eastern city. It was late afternoon, and the town lay like some spotted monster, dappled with light and shadow, stretching out sinuous tentacles of roads over the sun-baked land. One of these curling up the hillside enclosed the monastery in its grasp.

The small hermitage which was to be his home was on his right; and yet farther along the hillside on a small terrace Hilarion noted with a sudden spasm of heart a row of rough graves fashioned beneath a few stunted olive-trees, which thrust up gnarled trunks from the dry soil. Mechanically he counted the graves—eleven. Four of the brethren, then, were missing: they must have succumbed in the city. The sixteenth would now be lying in the chapel, waiting in grim silence for Hilarion to place him in rank with the rest—in the rank where he too would possibly take his station. It was a terrible task, but the sooner undertaken the sooner ended. It was better to finish before the night came down.

The hermitage door was shut, and he peered anxiously through the grid, but the interior was dark, and he could see nothing. Slowly he pushed the door open, fearing the sight which should be before his eyes. But he was still standing in his own light, and the interior of the hermitage was invisible.

He stepped within and to one side. His eyes, accustomed to the sun, required a moment to adjust themselves. Gradually he became certain that the chapel was empty. A mattress on the floor, a drinking-jar made from a gourd, a rough woollen blanket were all the signs of the late occupant. Brother Gualterius, the sixteenth martyr, must have died in the town. Hilarion expressed a deep sigh of gratitude, sat down on the step of the hermitage, and looked out over the hills.

He sat brooding and motionless while the sun sank and while the colours of the landscape faded into sombre greys, and with the changing of external nature the hues of his mind changed also. The elation had long disappeared, but the joy caused by the absence of Gualterius's body gave way to depression and to anxiety.

Slowly his eyes followed the last fading glow of the sunlight across the heaving country. He felt that this sunlight was holding something back, keeping away something which was striving to reach him. When the last tint of warmth had disappeared, he became conscious of what this something was: it was loneliness.

From over the edge of the hills it was as though some huge demon called Solitude, some emanation of an earth spirit, towered over him, crushing him with the immensity of its bulk. He felt as though

shrinking to something as small and as petty as the ant, which, panic-stricken, was running over his foot. He was utterly alone. He remembered the whispering of the date-palms, and now was sure that nature contained something which despised man. He knew that in all those miles of broad landscape there was not one touch of sympathy for him or for his fate. He looked up: the stars were beginning to appear; they seemed more indifferent than the earth. And God was farther away than the stars. At his feet the city lay in a sombre silence; the people had become tired of weeping. From where he sat it was as though every soul in it were dead.

After a time the oppression of the solitude became so heavy that he stood up and gripped his staff. In spite of the plague he was going down into the town. He felt an urgent need to be close to his fellow-men. It did not matter whether he touched the hem of danger's robe now or to-morrow morning. There was perhaps as much risk in sleeping in the cell where eleven had died as in the city itself. But he must get rid of his loneliness. There were Christian houses in the outer suburb. To one of these he would make his way as though seeking news of Brother Gualterius.

Though the town lay so close to the monastery walls, the road made a long distance of it. The hill was steep, and

the road had been made to bring up the heavy marble columns of the church. He was unable to take the short cut, because of the gloom, so stumbled down-hill through the stones and dust of the road.

The moon had risen before he reached the outskirts of the city. Here the houses were wretched hovels covered with dried reeds and clay, or cowering behind high mud walls, the only entrance a high heavy gate, faced with metal and studded with nails. The windows looking out on to the roads were crossed and re-crossed with lattices of painted wood. Through these lattices in former times the children of the harems used to jeer at the Christian fathers. None of the wretched lamps, which in normal times faintly illuminated the path, were lighted; and though the moon was now high enough, it did not distinguish different objects on the road, for all were bleached with the white dust. Hilarion stumbled and stubbed his toes, and was almost wishing himself back on the hillside with the loneliness.

He turned a corner, and came suddenly on a scene which made him stop. Here the street opened out into a wider place. In this place, lit by the cold glare of the moon, were three men. They were all half crouching, stepping warily with their feet ere they planted them on the soil. The moon glittered on steel, and Hilarion noted that two car-

ried long knives, the other a sword. In a moment he realised that the knives were manœuvring against the swordsman: one was trying to occupy his attention without coming within reach, while the other was trying to get behind him.

Suddenly the swordsman whirled his weapon in the air. "Corpo di Bacco," he cried, "don't stay dancing all night."

Hilarion felt a wave of anger. There were two infidels against a Christian. He gripped his heavy staff and ran in.

His sandals made no noise in the dust, and unnoticed he had almost reached the group when the three men closed. He hit one of the Turks a swinging crack with his staff, knocking his enemy over. With exclamations of surprise the man staggered to his feet, stood for a moment as though dazed, then stumbled away as rapidly as he was able, holding a hand to his head. Having dropped his knife, he did not care to face a man with a staff. The other ruffian, who was locked with the Italian, realising that the odds were now reversed, shook himself free, at the same moment stabbing wildly with the knife, and ran after his companion. The Italian gave a cry, clapped his hands to his chest, and suddenly sat down. Hilarion went over to him.

"He knifed me," said the Italian. "It was a chance blow, but it has gone home." He began to cough. "I know.

I've seen many before. Plant it there, and we go." Suddenly he recognised the habit of Hilarion. "By all the gods, a Father," he cried; "I'll die happy. You can shrive me."

"But," replied Hilarion, "you do not bleed. Come with me to the nearest Christian house. We can bind up your wound."

"It is inside," said the other, coughing; "you can't tie up insides." He coughed again, and spat up something which was black in the moonlight. "There," he said as soon as he had recovered; "you can see for yourself. I expect it'll be the lung or something. Shrive me, Father. I'll not have time to confess, nor the memory. They are only the usual sins, anyway. Just the sins that make up life. You know, Father."

Hilarion rapidly performed his duty. He had a sensation that this man was an expert in death.

"I'm going," said the Italian suddenly. "In my belt, Father, is a purse of a hundred gold pieces. Give them to the captain."

He choked once more. "Per Bacco," he whispered when the fit was over.

"Captain who?" asked Hilarion.

The Italian, breathing stertorously, did not answer the question. "Water," he whispered. "Water, for God's sake."

Hilarion made a gesture of despair.

"But Captain who?" he asked again.

The Italian suddenly sat upright. "Bacchus," he cried, and fell back dead.

He was a well-made man, almost clean shaven, and dressed like a seaman of moderate rank. He lay still on his back, his eyes staring at the moon, his hands turned down gripping the gravel. His jaw had dropped, and the irregular stumps of his teeth glittered white. The moon painted his face with a ghastly chill, and the shading of the two or three days' growth of beard gave his features a startling prominence. Hilarion stared down at him, amazed by the appalling rapidity of his passing. The monk had come but little in contact with death. His work of painting in the church had fended him off from much of that intimate acquaintanceship with the dead which is the lot of most Churchmen. The dead man stared up at the sky. His open mouth gave him the appearance of being in the act of shouting defiance to an enemy. He did not look as though his shouting days were for ever past. Hilarion suddenly thought that all those sixteen who had preceded him must have looked thus.

A picture of himself in the dead man's place leaping to his mind made a cold shudder run through his body. In a few days he would be like this, and the moon would stare down with foolish grinning face,

unmoved. The effects of the spontaneous act of courage which had strung up his nerves had now passed, leaving him weaker than he was before. He began to tremble.

In an uncertain way he began to fumble at the dead man's waist-belt, to find the hundred gold pieces of which the Italian had spoken. He felt that he must do something. The waist-belt was a long woollen wrap, and in order to get it off he was forced to move the body this way and that. The physical contact with the dead man, the feeling of his inert weight, again made him shiver. Suddenly the fear of death, like a panic, seized him. The untempered steel which had withstood two thrusts bent at the third.

Scarcely conscious of his act, he began to strip the dead man. It was a ghastly and a difficult task. But at last the clothes were off. There was little blood on them, for the wound had bled inwardly, as the other had said. Stripping off his habit, he put on the clothes of the dead man; and grown almost callous in the urgency of his fear, he dragged the rough habit on to the now stiffening body. The sailor's clothes were a little large for him, not in height, but in girth. They would serve. He wound the belt about his body, and rejoiced to find in the purse fold at the end the packet of gold pieces.

With this money and that from the monastery he could

escape. Why should he die—he who had never yet lived?

Strange suppressed desires arose in him. He would go down to the sea and across the oceans to broader lands. He *would* live before he died. He told himself that he had never been fitted for the religious life. Had it not been for the painting which he had loved he would have escaped from it. Life must contain other things more desirable than mere painting. Why should he give up his life for a handful of cowardly monks quailing behind a locked gate?

With steps which stumbled over the uneven ground because of the unaccustomed boots, he made his way out of the suburbs towards the open country—towards the sea.

He walked for the greater part of the night, and then, because his boots were painful, he lay down under an olive-tree and fell asleep. When he awoke the landscape was beginning to show more detail. The dawn was near. Suddenly, almost at his elbow, a cock screamed out its morning challenge. A small farm, unnoticed in the night, was behind him.

Aloysius had said, "When the cock crows." Was Aloysius then waiting for him at the little hermitage?

The cock crowed again.

He remembered the words: "When the cock crows twice,

thou shalt have denied Me thrice."

Was that what Aloysius had meant? Did he then suspect his courage? But what of Ambrosius? Yes! Ambrosius had thrown himself from the wall because he had not the strength to wait. Aloysius had pierced him through. Aloysius had suspected that he might not stand the test.

Strangely enough, the thought brought him a means of comfort; he was able to rationalise on it. If Aloysius had known, then how could he, Hilarion, have acted differently? There must be a truth in fatalism: freewill did not exist save in appearance. If he were coward, then he would be brave enough to acknowledge himself one. At any rate, he was no more coward than all the others who had locked themselves in. (He forgot that sixteen had not bent in the straining.) Even cowards can live, and he was not all coward. He had helped the Italian even at the risk of his life.

He took off his hat to wipe his forehead. Quickly he remembered his tonsure, and clapped on his hat once more. He must remember not to uncover his head in public, or at least until he had found some infidel barber who would shave his scalp clean. Then he thought of a better idea: he ripped some of the lining from his coat, and with it bound up his head in seaman's fashion.

V.

Ten years later a pilgrim, a man in appearance between fifty and sixty years of age, stumbled up the sinuous road which led to the monastery. He had a pointed nose and a long ragged but thin beard. His face was that of one who has indeed lived, and at the same time was seamed with furrows of mental torture, which contrasted strangely with those made by dissipation. He was a man who for ten years had been trying to drown memory.

He crept into the church with a humble, almost with a terrified, air, and stared round him, noting the old familiar details. To the right-hand side, however, was a new chapel enclosing a large monument. It was elaborately carved, and seemed only recently finished. Indeed, a monk standing in front of the monument was at the moment laying thin leaves of gold on to a series of names deeply graved in the stone. The pilgrim shuffled nearer.

On the base of the monument, in letters already gilt, he could read :—

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
TO THE HONOUR AND GLORY
OF THOSE MONKS WHO IN
THE GREAT PESTILENCE SAC-
RIFICED THEIR LIVES, MAR-
TYRS IN THE PATH OF DUTY.

Then followed a list of names, beginning with that of Brother Eugenius. Mechanically the

pilgrim counted them. They were seventeen. The monk with the wash-leather gilding pad was lifting the fragile strips of gold on the point of his brush, and was laying them carefully on to the sixteenth name, that of Brother Gualterius. Because it was not gilt the pilgrim could not read the last name.

After a moment of hesitation he addressed the gilder—

“Pardon me, Father, but you are gilding the names of those who died during the plague?”

“As you see,” answered the monk, “I have but one last name to do. I shall be finished before the evening.”

“And,” said the pilgrim with a tremor in his voice, “the last name, which I cannot read. Is it Aloysius, by chance?”

“Why, no,” replied the monk in surprise. “Brother Aloysius never went out to the plague. He was not permitted. No! The last name is that of Brother Hilarion.”

The name seemed to shock the pilgrim; he staggered.

“You are ill,” exclaimed the monk, looking about him for somewhere to put down his delicate tools. “What is the matter?”

“It is nothing, nothing,” gasped the pilgrim. “It will pass. Brother Hilarion, did you say?”

“Yes,” replied the monk. “It occurred, of course, before I came here. Indeed, I came

in the place of one of those who died. Brother Hilarion was the last of them. To speak truly, he did not die of the plague, for its strength had passed before he went out. But he was murdered by the infidel robbers to whom the disorder of the plague had given free licence. His body was found much mauled by dogs. As the result, because his death was caused (though indirectly) by the plague, his name was included amongst those of the martyrs. Which indeed was only just."

"And the plague was over," said the pilgrim.

"That is how they tell it," replied the monk.

"And the last name is not yet gilt."

"As you see," replied the monk.

"It is fate," murmured the pilgrim.

"What did you say?" inquired the gilder.

"Nothing, nothing. I was but thinking," answered the pilgrim hastily. "This Brother Hilarion was indeed some relative of mine, or rather a connection. I have heard letters from him read aloud, and so came to know the name of Brother Aloysius. But I did not know that Brother Hilarion was dead." There was a moment of silence.

"Dead and buried," added the pilgrim with emphasis.

"I shall have gilded his name by to-night," said the monk.

"Hum, yes," answered the

pilgrim; "to-night he will be gilt—to-night."

"Pardon me, Father," he went on, "but there was a beautiful garden of which Hilarion wrote. He was fond of it. Would it be permitted for a stranger to see this, so that perhaps he might take back some picture in words to comfort the old parents?"

"Surely, surely," said the good-natured monk. He put away his tools in a box which he locked. Then he led the way along well-remembered passages, until he came to the small door. The pilgrim, as if moved by impulse, touched him on the arm.

"Do not gild the last name," he muttered.

"What did you say?" asked the guide. "Did you ask when the last name would be gilt? Why, to-night, as I have already said."

"Ah, yes," said the pilgrim, drawing back, "of course."

The monk pushed open the door, which still groaned. Now, the pilgrim knew why it groaned.

Beneath his feet the garden, unchanged in its major aspects, sloped to the old walls, the olives and the oranges mingled on the terraces, and there was a smell of orange blossom in the air. The date-palms still whispered. They were whispering in their sneering way that he had come back.

"From here the view is the best," said the monk.

"And so poor Hilarion died," said the pilgrim.

"Yes," answered the monk, "but in some way he was more fortunate than his fellows. It is easier to be stabbed than to die of the plague."

"How do you know which is easier?" cried the pilgrim, as if forgetting himself. "How do you know what Hilarion suffered?"

"Why, of course," answered the monk, taken aback, "I don't know. I only say what others say. That is all."

There was a long silence.

"And Ambrosius threw himself from the wall," said the pilgrim.

"You know that too," exclaimed the monk.

"Oh, I was told in the city," replied the pilgrim.

He took a step downwards, looked furtively around him, hesitated, took another step.

"Where are you going?" asked the monk.

"But Hilarion is buried," said the pilgrim, as if to himself, "and his name will be gilt this evening." He retreated up the two steps.

"I had a foolish impulse to see where Ambrosius killed himself," he said, "but it has

passed. I thank you for your kindness, father."

When he had stepped out of the monastery, he turned to the right, and sat down at the door of the small chapel.

After ten years he had come back to confess, but the sight of his name carved on the base of the monument had closed for him that way of escape. However, one weight had been lifted from his mind: no one had died in his place. In the garden he had thought of following Ambrosius over the precipice, but the thought that his body might be identified had stopped him.

"Fools," he burst out; "and they say I died more easily than the others."

With a sigh he rose to his feet, picked up his pilgrim's satchel and his staff, and began to shuffle off down the hill. He might have taken the shorter cut, but he did not do so. The long twisting road suited his mood. It was indeed an image of what lay before him. There were no short cuts by means of which he could reach the desired end.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE TROUBLES OF THE CABINET—THE SCANDAL OF IRELAND—
THE PURCHASE OF HONOURS—THE REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF
LORDS—A NATIONAL HOME FOR THE JEWS.

DISRAELI once advocated the hanging of an architect for the good of his profession, and it would be wise indeed to transfer this pleasant encouragement to politicians. For of all men politicians manifest the smallest sense of responsibility. As they have attempted to usurp the King's office in the State, so they have claimed for themselves the royal immunity from wrongdoing. In other professions men suffer for their negligence or their wickedness. No suffering ever overtakes the politician. He may fail again and again; he may involve his fellow-citizens in ruin and bloodshed: he takes no risk, and loses neither money nor esteem. If a man of business forgets his duty, his balance-sheet soon reveals to him the unpalatable truth. None save the politician escapes the consequences of his acts, and it is not strange, therefore, in a world which holds more cynics than patriots, that the work of government is exceedingly ill done.

Nor is the present Ministry at great pains to find an honest defence for its failure to govern. Such demagogues as Lord Birkenhead and Mr M'Curdy are content to point out that things might be worse, and to assure

us that the Coalition is the one possible bulwark against Labour and sedition. Now, for our part, we do not think that Labour, installed at Westminster, would be a greater danger to the peace and security of the realm than is the present Coalition. It would certainly be far more honest and far less cunning than the Government which is driving us fast down the hill of destruction. It could not show a worse fear of the assassin, a keener sympathy with rebellion, than have been shown by the Coalition. Its policy of presenting us with Socialism in a single lump would undoubtedly fail, since it could not escape notice, whereas Mr Lloyd George's slier method of yielding piece by piece, whatever the Socialists demand, may elude the scrutiny of all save the most vigilant. And do you think Labour's sympathy with Bolshevism could be more openly unashamed than Mr Lloyd George's? The best friends which our autocratic Minister has had have been the murderers whom he has taken to his breast. Wherefore, we do not go in hourly dread of Labour's dark machinations, and we would rather be ruled by Messrs Seddon and

Stanton, whose limitations we know, than by Mr Austen Chamberlain, who is prepared to change his views instantaneously at the mere bidding of Mr Lloyd George.

It was once said that the Coalition must be judged by its results, and if that be so, its condemnation must be stern and immediate. It has plunged Ireland into civil war, and it has obstinately refused to punish, or even to resent, the murders and outrages which have been done upon loyal citizens. The old days, when the assertion, *civis Romanus sum*, was enough to procure redress, are gone for ever. At this moment, any miscreant, whom it amuses to rob or to assassinate an English citizen, may work his will in Ireland without let or hindrance. If he choose to outrage women, there is nothing to stand in the way of his foul design. Even though he be well known, he is immune from arrest, and the "representations" which are made humbly and with cap in hand by English Ministers to the Provisional Government are without doubt thrown into the waste-paper basket. The soldiers hanged at Macroom are still unavenged, and the only satisfaction which can be obtained from Mr Churchill is that presently their murderers will be brought to justice. At this moment it might be inconvenient to insist upon reparation, but a time will come. The time will never come. Were a miracle to happen, and Ire-

land to settle down to a period of law and order, which is not probable, then we should hear the other side of the argument. It would be a pity, we should be told, to disturb the peace and tranquillity of Ireland for an act of retributive justice; and the murderers of British soldiers, whom the Government is pledged to protect, will still walk abroad proudly free. Such is one debt we owe to the Coalition—the lives and possessions of loyalists in the South of Ireland are completely insecure, and they are insecure because the politicians, ever since 1906, have neglected their plain duty to govern, and have not been called to account for their interested negligence.

The two Coalitions may share the guilt impartially between them. Mr Asquith prepared the way. The Coalition over which he presided encouraged the rebellion; the Coalition enslaved by Mr Lloyd George has not merely permitted Ireland to lapse into civil war, but has declined to ensure the sanctity either of life or property. If murders are committed and banks are robbed day by day in Ireland, it is still the business of England to see that proper redress is granted to her loyal citizens. Suppose a British citizen is foully murdered in Germany, let us say, or in Italy: should we not demand in the ordinary course of diplomacy that the guilty murderer should be brought to the gallows? Should we not threaten some sort of

reprisal if the foreign State refused to interest itself in the fate of an Englishman? After the unavenged slaughter of Captain Cromie and others in Russia, we confess sadly that the British Government seems to have given up protecting those who have a right to rely upon its protection. There was a time when a British citizen might move about the world in the well-founded belief that both he and his goods were safe from attack. And even if the Irish Free State were already in existence, that would not absolve Michael Collins and his friends from the duty of protecting British lives and British property. Either he is unable to perform this elementary duty, in which case he is unfit to be entrusted with a provisional or any other Government; or he is indifferent, in which other case he should be denounced as the enemy of the British Empire.

It was, as we have said, Mr Asquith who began it all. For ten years he permitted Mr Birrell, who refused to be "pinioned to Dublin," to pursue the policy of inaction which chimed with his temperament. And then when the shameful rebellion came in 1916, which had been foreseen by all those who knew Ireland, Mr Asquith went over to Dublin, treated the Sinn Feiners with consideration, ordered them better rations than the soldiers had who guarded them, and left them, no doubt, with the just impression that

there was nothing that Great Britain would not endure at their hands, and endure gladly. Thus was a new rebellion invited to arise from the ashes of the old. Memories are notoriously short, and the responsibility for the shameful events of 1916 and afterwards has been lifted off the shoulders upon which it should have rested for ever. Mr Asquith, with a marvellous indelicacy, still dares to address the House of Commons upon the Irish question, and Mr Birrell has not been ashamed to write of Irish affairs in a magazine. But happily the sins of Messrs Asquith and Birrell are set forth in a blue-book—the report of Lord Hardinge's Committee,—and it is well, in this moment of crisis, to recall precisely what that Committee, free from bias or partisanship, found to be true.

When the war began in 1914, it was notorious that the Irish volunteers were in close communication with their friends the Germans. What this meant to Great Britain should have been obvious to all. It was not obvious to Mr Birrell, or if it were it did not excite him to action. "It was of paramount importance," said the Commissioners, "that after the outbreak of the present war no opportunity should have been given for the drilling and arming of any body of men known to be of seditious tendency, and no other consideration should have interfered with the enforcing of this duty." You would have

thought that so simple a policy would have been instantly adopted. Mr Birrell, in the hour of Great Britain's danger, preferred to watch and to wait. He listened most willingly to the counsel of Mr Redmond, whose one chance of keeping the fragments of his broken authority together was to oppose the British Government. "One unfortunate thing," said Major Price, a military witness, "which hindered us a good deal was the attitude of the official Nationalist Party and their Press. Whenever General French did anything strong in the way of suppressing or deporting these men (the rebels) from Ireland, they at once deprecated it, and said it was a monstrous thing to turn a man out of Ireland." And so through 1915 the Sinn Feiners were permitted to prepare for the rebellion, which they thought would be the best method of hampering Great Britain in her struggle with Germany. It was idle for those whose eyes were opened to warn the supine Ministers. "New measures," wrote the Under-Secretary to Mr Birrell in December 1915, "possibly requiring additional police at the ports, will be required to counter the attempts of the volunteers; and unless in other matters we keep these revolutionaries under observation, we shall not be in a position to deal with the outbreak, which we hope will not occur." Mr Birrell either did not watch the revolutionaries, or thought

that they were best left to do their job in comfort. Perhaps he was of Falstaff's opinion, that it was right for a man to "labour in his vocation." And even when Lord Wimborne, the Lord-Lieutenant, roused at last, wished to arrest the worst of the rebels, "he was unable to move further, owing to the general attitude of the Government towards Ireland, which it was impossible to disturb."

So the rebellion came, and soldiers, who had fought in France for their King and their country, were shot down in the streets of Dublin. Nor can there be any doubt as to the main cause of the rebellion. It appears to be, said the report of Lord Hardinge's Committee, "that lawlessness was allowed to grow up unchecked, and that Ireland for several years past has been administered on the principle that it was safer and more expedient to leave law in abeyance if collision with any faction of the Irish people could thereby be avoided." Yet it appears that no public stain rests on the reputation of Mr Asquith or of Mr Birrell, who were responsible for the good order and the sound administration of the law in Ireland. We heard then no rumour of their impeachment. We hear no such rumour now. And we shall never know the blessings of righteous government until Ministers are forced to suffer, and to suffer bitterly, for their misdeeds. What, then, was the worst crime committed by

Messrs Asquith and Birrell? In the words of the report from which we have already quoted, it was "the negation of that cardinal rule which demands that the enforcement of law and the preservation of order should always be independent of political expediency." This simple truth has a strange old-fashioned ring about it. It belongs to the time when our Ministers still took their duties gravely, when they thought that something more was expected of them than a fierce clinging to office and the emoluments of office, when the safety of the Empire was not a jest, and when the right prejudice against the reckless shedding of blood was still alive among us.

Now see what has happened because Messrs Asquith and Birrell refused to make the enforcement of law and the preservation of order independent of political expediency. We have witnessed in Ireland six years of arson and bloodshed. We have watched the rise of Sadic passion in a country unused to any kind of discipline. British soldiers have been murdered in their beds and in hospital. Loyal citizens, stripped of all their possessions, have been driven from a country where law was no longer enforced, and order had ceased to be preserved. And as a culmination, a British Field-Marshal, to whose wisdom and courage Great Britain is deeply indebted, has been shot by foul assassins in the streets

of London. We have been looking on, as disinterested spectators, while bands of rebels, differing hardly at all in opinion, have laid Dublin in ruins; and to make our complicity in this final crime clear to all the world, we have sternly refrained from taking part in the fight, but have supplied the faction which we favour with the munitions of war. The faction thus honoured has accepted what aid we have proffered, and bidden us understand that, though we may send to Ireland aeroplanes and big guns, the fight now in progress, which endangers the lives and houses of loyal citizens, is no business of ours. Nor will it be our business, we suppose, when the happy faction turns the weapons which we have freely supplied against Ulster. Truly we have woven a tangled web, and we know not how in the dark future it will ever be unravelled.

It is a difficult thing to break through a Coalition which slavishly obeys an autocratic Minister. It is yet more difficult to stir to a proper appreciation of the prevailing anarchy a people which is enfranchised and apathetic. The only possible safeguard is to inflict a condign punishment upon Ministers who bring ruin upon the Empire for nothing better than political expediency. In ancient Athens there was a system called ostracism, by which the sovereign people might rid itself of a mischievous or dangerous Minister. At a fixed season

in each year the Assembly decided whether it would hold an ostracism or not. And if it were arranged to hold an ostracism, then each of the citizens scratched upon a potsherd the name of the man whom he desired to ostracise. If less than 6000 voted, the ostracism was invalid, but if the proper number of votes was cast, he who was condemned by the majority was asked to leave Athens in ten days, and not to return thither for ten years. It seems to us an excellent plan, and if we could but apply this simple method of condemnation to arrogant and ignorant Ministers, we should have less fear of the democracy.

As though the scandal of Ireland were not sufficient to discredit the Government, another shame has fallen upon it, and left its equanimity still undisturbed. It has long been the practice of our Radicals to make the House of Lords a dumping-ground for those supporters who are willing to help the party with money in exchange for what is a doubtful honour. Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues, who have for ten years regarded the reform of the House of Lords as a debt of honour, prefer to fill it with their friends. There now sit upon the benches of what was once a distinguished chamber a mob of men whose one merit has been a sinister generosity. The money thus ill gotten is ill spent. It is squandered in

such enterprises as the manufacturing of a muddled opinion, the vile thing known as propaganda, and the sending down of carpet-baggers to innocent constituencies, which might deserve better treatment. This system has prevailed for many a year, and the present Government has been questioned more than once. It has been questioned in vain. The corruption is unchecked, and unchecked it would have remained had not some one, grown careless, suggested Sir J. B. Robinson for the highest distinction. South Africa expressed its disapproval severely of this South African's elevation. There were heated debates in the House of Lords, and had not Sir J. B. Robinson extricated the Government from a delicate position, it might have been driven into an uncomfortable corner. But Sir J. B. Robinson declined the proffered honour, and for the moment saved those who are responsible for this delicate patronage from the punishment of their indiscretion. But the problem is not yet solved, and confidence will not be wholly restored to the Government or to the House of Lords until it is publicly recognised that merit, not money, is the sole cause of advancement. There are many men sitting in the House of Lords who never should have entered its doors, and whose presence cannot but cast a slur upon what was once an honourable body. Two things, then, are necessary. First, we must discover

the method which has lately been followed in the creation of peers; and secondly, we must remove from the Prime Minister the temptation of recommending for peerages men rich and useful to himself. Of late years far too many proprietors of journals have been invited to take their seats in the Upper House—the shortest cut known to demagogues of establishing a reptile press, which is the worst danger a nation can be asked to face. And this manifest temptation can be removed from the Prime Minister only by placing in the hands of a committee the solemn duty of advising the King to appoint as peers those who have done real and conspicuous service to the State, rather than partisans who have been content to help with their praise or their moneybags the party which happens to be in power.

We have said that the Government has always been more eager to pack the House of Lords than to reform it. The debt of honour which brooks no delay remains unpaid, and will remain unpaid if the belated resolutions proposed by the Government for the reform of the House of Lords are the best that the Government can devise. As a public document, these resolutions are no better than the ridiculous “treaty” with Ireland, agreed upon in the small hours of the morning by jaded and indifferent men. They bear upon them all the marks of a Coalition. They

are meaningless and indeterminate. They leave unsettled all the questions which are in dispute. They express nothing more than a half-hearted desire to do something. What that “something” will be they carefully conceal from the view of the world.

There is not a schoolboys’ debating society in the world which could not produce a better scheme. The one clear statement that is made is this: “The reconstituted House of Lords shall consist approximately of 350 members.” And it is noteworthy that even here some qualification is necessary. “Approximately” is a word without which our tired Coalition could say nothing. Of what, then, is the “approximate” body to consist? In addition to peers of the Blood Royal, Lords Spiritual, and Law Lords, the House shall be composed of (a) “members elected, either directly or indirectly, from the outside.” Here are loopholes enough to suit any politician. “Directly or indirectly”—do not these blessed words suggest a dozen ways of escape? What they mean we do not pretend to know. Doubtless we shall never know. Presently, when they have served their turn to befog a weary Parliament, they will be swept into the basket of forgetfulness, the common receptacle of debts of honour. Again, “from the outside” is a convenient phrase. It may mean anybody or nobody. It may include the whole elec-

torate; it may suggest the County Councils. Perhaps it doesn't matter what it means, since it is improbable that we shall hear much more about it. And we can derive little more satisfaction from (b) "Hereditary Peers elected by their order," and (c) "Members nominated by the Crown, the numbers in each case to be determined by statute." These elaborate subdivisions are irrelevant until we know the numbers. If (c) is always in excess of (b), as assuredly it would be, then the Prime Minister, who pretends to advise the Crown and acts for himself, can control the House of Lords, as he will. Nor are we greatly helped by the fact that the members of the reconstituted and reduced House of Lords shall hold their seats for a term of years to be fixed by statute, but shall be eligible for re-election. We know only that the re-election would be an excellent opportunity for repacking the House. The peers who had ventured to oppose the Government would have short shrift if they presented themselves a second time, and the way would be open for every kind of gerrymandering.

As the number of the Lords is "approximate" only, as the method of their election is left wholly obscure, so the Government has been careful to throw little light upon their privileges. The one point that is at all clear is that the decision whether a Bill is or is not a money Bill will rest, not with

the Speaker, as it rests to-day, but with a Joint Standing Committee of the two Houses. But as we are left in the dark as to how and by whom the Joint Standing Committee shall be appointed, we cannot be hopeful of its impartiality. Not a word is said in this timid document concerning the veto, which must be restored if the House of Lords is to become a real and efficient chamber. As, however, we are told that "the provisions of the Parliament Act, 1911, by which Bills can be passed into law without the consent of the House of Lords during the course of a single Parliament, shall not apply to any Bill which alters or amends the constitution of the House of Lords as set out in these resolutions, or which in any way changes the powers of the House of Lords as laid down in the Parliament Act and modified by these Resolutions," we presume that it is the purpose of the Government still to deprive the House of its ancient veto. Here once more we see the Coalition at work. The Conservative half demanded the restoration of the veto. The Radical half would have no veto at any price. So a compromise was arrived at. The House of Lords may decline to accept any further changes in its constitution if it be so minded. It may, by a vast condescension on the part of the Government, repel any further attack upon itself. That is all; and who shall say that

the Radicals in the compromise have not won an easy victory?

It is improbable, as we have said, that these precious resolutions, vague and indefinite as they are, will be carried further than the stage of curiosity. But it may be pointed out that there is one question which they leave unanswered. What will become of the peers who are excluded from their own chamber? As the total will be but 350 all told (approximately), the larger number of hereditary peers will be left without a share in the Government of the country. Does the Cabinet intend to penalise these for their infamy in having been born peers, and to exclude them from both Houses of Parliament? Or will it, in its beneficence, permit them to vote at elections, and even to sit in the House of Commons themselves? If they are not permitted to discharge these functions, then will a gross injustice be done; and though we do not think that our Government has any natural shrinkage away from injustice, it would be well to have this important question definitely answered. We can understand that the Radicals would not like to receive the old peers of the realm into the House of Commons as competitors with themselves, but the apostles of universal suffrage cannot very well exclude from the franchise and from admission to the Commons' House a wise and respectable body of men.

And as though Ireland and the scandal of the honours were not sufficient to embarrass a Government which has lost the confidence of those who care for their country, there comes the question of Palestine still further to complicate our already tangled affairs. In a careless moment of untrammelled fancy we promised Palestine to the Jews for a national home. The absurdity of the promise is beyond belief. In the first place, the last thing in the world that the Jews want is a national home. They are the cuckoos of humankind, and they prefer the nests of others, already built. If they have been wanderers on the face of the earth for many centuries, that is because they have found their wanderings profitable. A frank unconcealed love of money obsesses them, and they can acquire money most easily where there exist hoards already accumulated by others. They are not overfond of manual toil, and they live most easily by the labour of others. We say this not so much in dispraise of the Jews, as to attempt to make clear a difficult situation. The history of the Jewish race proves that, while on the one hand it keeps its blood pure, on the other it prefers to find its home (or homes) among strangers. Why, then, should it be given a national home in Palestine? The result, moreover, proves how little the race was conscious of its lack. The Zionists, as we may call those

who have sought a refuge in Palestine, are for the most part Bolsheviki, who hope to escape the wrath which will surely come. We do not hear of prosperous Hebrews packing up their trunks and taking a long journey in order that they may dwell among their poorer kinsmen. We shall believe in the good faith of the movement when the wealthy leaders of the race desert Paris and London and Berlin for the sandy deserts of the Holy Land.

In the second place, when in the spirit of vicarious generosity we bestowed upon the Bolsheviki Palestine for their "national home," we forgot the Arabs and the debt that we owe to them. They have been established in the country for centuries, and they hold quite justly that if the Jews are allowed to claim Palestine, they should be permitted to claim Spain. And this is not all. While the war was in progress we gave the Arabs pledges, in 1915 and 1918, "that they would be allowed to establish governments that derived their initiative from the will of the people." These pledges have been disregarded, and Moslems and Christians, who form 93 per cent of the total population of Palestine, are asked to submit to the presence of thousands of unwelcome guests, thrust upon them by the will of others. What has become of the sacred principle of self-determination?

Those who object to the breaking of pledges given to

the Arabs are told that the Earl of Balfour made a pledge in the opposite sense to Lord Rothschild. If this be so, we know not why the pledge to Lord Rothschild should take precedence of the pledge to the Arabs. Nor does it seem to us the best means of expressing "the will of the people"—to give a promise and present its redemption as an accomplished fact. Either the franchise which has been forced unsought upon the men and women of these isles has some sort of significance, or it is a mere trick to deceive the electors. If it has any meaning, then the "people" has the right to say whether it will or will not spend many thousands of pounds a year in order to force a pack of Jews in need of a refuge upon the unwilling Arabs. If the franchise is a mere piece of trickery, the truth should be acknowledged, and we might take greater care in the choice of our despots. In the meanwhile we cannot understand why a pledge once given to Lord Rothschild by the Earl of Balfour should involve Great Britain in a responsibility which it cannot fulfil, and the fulfilment of which, were it possible, would bring it nothing but well-merited unpopularity.

For that is what the matter comes to. Shall we put the Arabs under a handful of Jews, or shall we leave them in the happy undisturbed possession of their lands? In the cunning of management the Arabs are no match for the Jews, and it

is probable that if left to themselves they would not be able to set up companies and dabble in finance. The thing which we call progress is not for them. Why should it be? There is no virtue in cutting all mankind to the same pattern, and there should still be room in the world for simple men, who are content to walk in the paths which their fathers trod, and who will die content, even though they know not the meaning of limited liability. After all, the Arabs have proved themselves in the past great both in art and in science, and they should not have been held up to contempt by Mr Churchill because they do not possess the rather sordid gift of making money out of nothing in as large a measure as the Jews possess it. Moreover, Mr Churchill might have remembered before he made light of the Arabs that we are the governors of a great Moslem Empire, and even if a sense of accuracy had not checked his utterance, tact might have suggested the wisdom of greater civility. For when the Arabs in Palestine have failed, as fail they will, to have their

grievances redressed by the British Government, they will make their appeal "for justice in the eyes of the Mohammedan world."

In what we have said we have not thought it necessary to refer to the well-known virtues and qualities of the Jews. We would merely point out that, in the opinion of Christians and Moslems alike, their presence in Palestine cannot be desirable. The holy places are still sacred to the worship of Christ, whom they crucified; and that they should pass into their care would seem naturally distasteful to the Church. Wherefore, Lord Balfour's argument that the Jews are intelligent and highly cultivated people seems wholly irrelevant. Nor is the situation made easier by granting a vast concession to a Russian Jew, Herr Rutenberg, into whose hands are delivered the destinies of Palestine. What can the poor Arabs do against so highly protected financiers? How can a shackled House of Commons adequately protest against facts, carefully hidden from its gaze, until they are accomplished?

HENRY WILSON.

BY THE RIGHT HON. L. S. AMERY, M.P.

IN Henry Wilson England has lost one whose greatness, as a soldier and as a man, was known to few except those who came into direct touch with him and with his life's work. That a personality so striking, an intellect so vivid, so forceful a temperament, and so great a sum of achievement, should have been almost unrealised by his countrymen as a whole, was due in part to the fact that he never held the appointments which naturally attract public attention. It was also due to his entire indifference to the bestowal of the credit as long as the things he cared for were done. And the things he cared for were impersonal things — national safety, the strength and unity of the Empire, and not the career of Henry Wilson. But it was this devotion, unfaltering and unsleeping, to the causes he served, that also accounts for the immense influence he exercised upon the whole course of events in the last twenty years.

There are always plenty of men of high character and good ability who do justice to the positions to which they attain, be they Cabinet offices or commands in the field. There are very few of whom it can be said that history would have been different if they had not been there. Henry Wilson was

emphatically of the latter class. Without him our Army would never have been prepared, as it was, not only in actual plans, but in mind and outlook, for the war in comradeship with France against Germany. Without him the British Government would probably have failed at the critical moment in August 1914, and not have come in at all, or come in too late for honour and victory. Without him the Expeditionary Force would not have been despatched in time to save the situation in the opening weeks of the war. Without him it would not have remained one Army with the French during the retreat and so have made possible the Marne. Without him there would have been no unity of policy and no unified command in 1918. Not that the sole credit for these things was his. But in every case he was the initiating, urging, persuading, dominating force that led to the right decision at the critical moment. No soldier, not even Marshal Foch, made a greater individual contribution to the final victory.

Henry Wilson's life, when it comes to be written, will set out these matters in their true perspective. I can only indicate rough outlines and give a few incidents from the memories of many years of friendship and close association in

kindred tasks. My very first recollection of him goes back to the camp at Chieveley in Natal on the eve of the battle at Colenso. I can see now the immensely long figure, legs wide apart, and hands behind his back, with that curious, furrowed, lovable, original face, that *physiognomie apart*, to use the phrase by which a French officer was once able to indicate beyond possibility of doubt the British general whose name he had forgotten. He was then a captain, brigade-major of Neville Lyttelton's Brigade. That was his official position, a position conveying no indication of the influence which, even then, he exercised upon the course of the campaign. At Spion Kop, when the 60th Rifles were launched on the attack on the Twin Peaks, Captain Wilson intercepted and pocketed order after order recalling them, and thus enabled them to capture the crest, and had Buller but known it, to win the battle. No less typical was the way in which, when the best part of three brigades were mixed in inextricable confusion on the Tugela Heights a month later, and cut off from the main army, the young brigade-major practically took over the command for forty-eight hours.

Lord Roberts, always on the look-out for brilliant promise in young soldiers, had long before this drawn Wilson into the charmed circle of his friendship, and at the end of 1900 brought him back to the War

Office, where for the next two years he was mainly busy with the task of keeping that venerable institution from forgetting that the war was still going on and had still to be won. The moment the war was over Wilson's restless mind was on the business of creating an army fit to fight the next war. I was in those days the chief military writer on the 'Times,' and his one preoccupation was to get me to come and see the troops and their training for myself, and convince myself of the unreality of much of the ambitious scheme of Army reorganisation which had been launched by Mr Brodric, of the need for a real General Staff, and of a proper organisation of the War Office itself. If the Army Reform campaign in the Press had any lasting effect, as it undoubtedly did have through the appointment of Lord Esher's Committee and in other ways, it was in no small measure because Wilson's ideas and Wilson's impulse were behind it.

But his real life's work was now beginning. He had always taken an immense interest, as a student of war, in the Franco-Prussian War. Like other students, but far more earnestly and methodically, he had made himself familiar with the whole field of those operations. Gradually he became convinced that the same struggle was bound to recur over the same field—only with the one difference, that we were bound to be involved in it. My recollection

is that by 1905, certainly by 1906, he was not only convinced that Germany meant to make war, but how and where she meant to launch her attack. As Commandant of the Staff College he had an opportunity of bringing this conviction home to all the ablest younger soldiers in the Army. It was an opportunity used to the full. When the old Expeditionary Force took up its line at Mons in August 1914, it was on ground that not a few of its officers knew almost by heart, and against an enemy whose advance followed almost exactly the course predicted in Henry Wilson's lectures. Mr Churchill was undoubtedly right when he stated the other day that, thanks to him, our Army realised much better than the French how the German attack was going to develop. Camberley was, perhaps, the happiest period of Henry Wilson's life. He loved teaching for its own sake, and he had the imagination to realise that the opportunity of implanting true ideas was the highest of all military commands.

At Camberley Wilson was all but next door to his revered old chief, Lord Roberts. The case which Wilson preached so earnestly to his students was no less convincing to Lord Roberts, and formed the starting-point of his great campaign for national service. That campaign failed of its primary object, which was to avert war by making Germany realise the strength of our armed reserve.

But it prepared the moral ground-work without which the nation would probably not have been ready for conscription when it became a question of losing the war without it.

To this period, if I remember rightly, dates Henry Wilson's other great friendship, that with Marshal Foch. I can still recall his enthusiasm over the discovery that France possessed in this then comparatively unknown professor-soldier a real military genius, one who could, if the occasion should ever come to him, turn the tables on Moltke. That the occasion did come to him was, in the end, in no small measure due to Wilson. But of this later.

From the Staff College Wilson went to the War Office as Director of Military Operations—from the theoretical study of the war in France to the practical preparations for waging it, so far as the settled military policy of this country enabled us to take any effective part in doing so. In closest co-operation with the French military authorities, whose absolute confidence he enjoyed from the first, every detail of the initial deployment of the Expeditionary Force was worked out by him throughout the four years that preceded the actual launching of Germany's attack. He visited every harbour where the expedition was to land to satisfy himself as to the sufficiency of the equipment—into one, at least, he smuggled in his own cranes to make up for local

deficiencies. He looked at every station to make sure that the arrangements, whether for coffee for the men or water for the horses, could be carried out properly. Our contribution to the common task at the outset might be inadequate, but he was determined that we should pull the full weight, and more than the full weight, of our small numbers.

Into this business of preparation suddenly intruded itself early in 1914 the ugly spectre of Irish Civil War. Henry Wilson was an Irish Unionist, passionately convinced that no good could ever come to Ireland or to the Empire by endeavouring to placate those elements in Ireland whose only conception of policy was the preaching of hatred against England. But he was not concerned with politics in themselves, and left them alone, with an occasional caustic comment. But when Mr Asquith's Government, after letting things drift steadily towards civil war by their refusal to face facts, committed the insensate folly of ordering the Army to march against Ulster, they imperilled not only the peace of Ireland but the very existence of the British Army. In face of this danger, threatening the ruin of all his plans, Wilson acted at once. Faced with the prospect of losing, not a handful of officers at the Curragh, but all the ablest of the senior officers at the War Office, the Government recovered its senses. But Wilson was not forgiven.

The danger was barely averted when Germany struck. Our engagement to France was informal. On paper we could always have made a more or less plausible case for backing out. And when the critical moment came the majority of the Cabinet were firmly resolved to back out. The story of that August Bank Holiday week-end: how first certain junior members of the Opposition were mobilised; how the leaders of the Opposition were brought back from their river or seaside retreats; how they were instructed in the full meaning of the blow Germany was preparing; how their intervention forced the hands of the Government and led to the only decision consistent with our honour and our interest,—that story may be told fully some day. The moving spirit in it all was one whose official duties were confined to waiting till the Government had made up its mind. Happily Wilson was not content to wait.

The anti-war party in the Cabinet, defeated on the main issue, stipulated that we should at any rate send no troops to the Continent. Here again but for Wilson's restless persistence the inevitable decision might have been delayed for weeks, and France have gone under. As it was, he could only get a decision after four precious days had been wasted, and then only for four instead of six divisions, the others being conceded later after much of the

work of years on shipping and railway time-tables was scrapped.

The man who had planned the whole scheme for the Expeditionary Force might have looked forward, not unnaturally, to serving as Chief of Staff to the Force when it took the field. But the Curragh incident stood in the way, and Wilson was only allowed to go out as Assistant Chief of Staff with the special and, thanks to his personality, all-important duty of keeping in touch with the French. For the moment it made no difference. His cheeriness on the retreat was as infectious in one position as in the other. His influence prevailed to secure the supremely important decision not to fall back on the Channel Ports, but to wheel back with the French Army and shift our bases.

I saw him often during the next few months. But the one picture I recall most vividly is that of Lord Roberts' coffin in the porch of the little Mairie at St Omer, and of two grief-stricken figures among the mourners standing by it, Pertab Singh and Henry Wilson, who now lies by his beloved chief's side in St Paul's.

Before long Sir A. Murray retired from the position of Chief of Staff to the Army in France. Lord French recommended Wilson, and our Allies took the unusual step of expressing the hope that this recommendation might be acceded to. But Mr Asquith was inexorable, and Wilson

was passed over for Sir W. Robertson. He was passed over again when the latter became Chief of the General Staff at the War Office at the end of 1915. The process of side-tracking, begun by political intervention, was sustained, almost unconsciously, perhaps, by the herd instinct of those who displaced him. He became as it were the "rogue" elephant, whose every attempt to do anything caused the ranks to close against him. A spell in command of the Fourth Corps—for him a happy time of freedom to teach and inspire—followed by Lord Milner's mission to Russia, where much useful work was done on foundations which were swallowed up in the revolution a few weeks later, led, with further intervals of *liaison* with the French, to his finally being squeezed out of France altogether, and relegated in the spring of 1917 to the routine inactivity of a "Command" in Pall Mall.

The months that followed were months of depression, but also of hard thinking. Freed from the instant preoccupations of the Western Front, Wilson had time to study the problems of the other theatres of the war. Gradually he realised more and more clearly that the dominant theory that the only front that mattered was the British sector in France, and that the other fronts were "side-shows," was mistaken—that there was in fact only one front from Nieuport to Baghdad, and that every sector in

that front had its part to play in the great battle. Even more clearly there grew in his mind the conviction that the failure of the Allies up to date was due to the complete lack of unity in their military policy. The efforts so far made to reach such unity impressed him only with their futility. The political chiefs of the Government would meet from time to time in conference, each with his attendant train of military experts profoundly wedded each to their own particular strategy. A few days would be spent in trying to adjust these strategies to each other with such success as their inherent disconnectedness allowed, and then each staff went away, rejoicing to have done with those tedious foreigners, and to get back as quickly as possible to their own local groove.

What was needed was not the adjustment of divergent strategies, but the execution of a single Allied strategy, and, with his true insight into the ultimate dependence of strategy on policy, he saw that such a strategy could only be based on a single Allied war policy. Gradually there shaped itself in his mind the conception of a standing political Council of the Allies, assisted by an inter-Allied military staff composed of officers capable of sinking completely their sectional strategical notions and of working out a common Allied strategy. At the end of August the plan was expounded with all Henry Wilson's iterative persuasive-

ness to Lord Milner and the writer through a long day on the Surrey Downs. In October it was submitted in its final form to the Prime Minister.

Mr Lloyd George had for some time felt serious misgivings about the strategical advice officially tendered him. His instinct told him that it was wooden and pedantic. But he could not feel sure enough of himself to disregard that advice unless he could find equally recognised military advice to confirm him. For want of it he had, against his better judgment, acquiesced in the wasteful slaughter of Passchendaele. He quickly realised that in Wilson he had to deal with a very different outlook, and when the Italian disaster at Caporetto confirmed both his own instinctive and constantly reasserted apprehensions about Italy, and Wilson's diagnosis of the weakness of the Allies in face of an enemy whose operations were based on a single policy, he saw that he had found the soldier who could save the situation. Under the influence of the disaster he carried through at the Rapallo Conference the whole of Wilson's scheme for a Supreme War Council of the Allies.

A few days later, on 19th November, Wilson and a couple of officers arrived in Paris to set up the inter-Allied Staff of the Supreme War Council. In the meantime M. Painlevé had fallen. The new Prime Minister, M. Clemenceau, had no doubt noticed that certain resolutions

had been agreed to at Rapallo to please Mr Lloyd George. But neither he nor his Chief of Staff, General Foch, had any serious intention of carrying them out. How Wilson talked them over, how he proceeded to commandeer at once the biggest hotel in Versailles and install the British section, how the "frocks" (to use Wilson's sobriquet for politicians) in the shape of Mr Lloyd George and Lord Milner came over a week later, and how the Supreme Council became an accomplished fact, is a story which may be told some day. Enough to say that Henry Wilson got his way, and that no one else could have done it.

The next two months at Versailles were a period of amazing activity. For the first time in the war the campaign was treated as a whole and a single Allied plan worked out. That plan was, of course, Wilson's, and, for that matter, nine-tenths of the detailed work of the inter-Allied Staff was initiated and carried out in the British section. Discarding the usual staff organisation, he divided the strategical side of his staff into "Allies" and "Boches." The duty of the "Boches," under Sir Hereward Wake, was to work out the German plans from the German point of view. Their task was at all costs to try and get inside the German skin—Wilson made them wear their caps the wrong way round so that whenever they looked up from their work they should see a Boche in the

mirror! They certainly fulfilled their task. They concluded that the Germans would be well advised not to attack on the Western Front. They concluded also that the Germans certainly would attack on that front. They concluded that the attack would take place on the very sector on which it did take place, and with almost the precise number of divisions which, in fact, carried it out. It was an astounding combination of patient deduction and confident divination.

The "Allies" examined this attack, which was due to fall close to the junction of the English and French armies. They arrived at two very simple conclusions. One was that if the two armies remained two armies, each disposing its reserves according to its own requirements, the Germans would get through. The other was, that if they were treated as one army and their reserves disposed accordingly, the Germans would push the line back but could not break it.

Upon these conclusions Wilson based his plan for 1918. The ideal of a single command for the Western Front was still unattainable. But national feeling might be assuaged and the essential object secured if the disposition and control of the main strategic reserves were left, nominally to a Committee of the Versailles representatives, but in fact to Foch as chairman of the Committee. With these dispositions the Allied forces

were to hold their own till the German offensive was spent, and advance to the counter-attack later in the year. Meanwhile it was undesirable that the Allies should be on the defensive everywhere, and his plan included a smashing offensive against the Turk in Palestine to coincide with the failure of the Germans to break through on the West. At the end of January the plan came before the Supreme War Council, and after much discussion, both of the Committee to control the reserves and of the Palestine advance, finally accepted.

But acceptance was one thing, execution another. Neither the British nor the French Commander-in-Chief made any step to carry out the resolutions as regards the reserves. General Pétain, indeed, not only persuaded M. Clemenceau that the existing arrangements between the two Armies were quite sufficient, but for the time being seems to have completely displaced Foch as his Prime Minister's adviser. When the Supreme Council met again in London on the very eve of the German attack, Wilson, who had meanwhile replaced Robertson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, found himself confronted by a combination of Clemenceau and the two Commanders-in-Chief, and by a situation which it was too late to mend. He could only acquiesce and await the disaster he foresaw.

But the disaster brought its own cure in time. Within

three days of the German break through Lord Milner crossed over to Paris, and, basing his action on Wilson's unquestioning confidence in Foch, not only persuaded M. Clemenceau to recall him to favour, but undertook there and then, on his own responsibility, to agree to his being placed in co-ordinating control of the whole front, an arrangement which subsequently became the more formal unified command. The tide of attack was stemmed, though at the cost of sacrificing, or rather postponing, Allenby's advance in Palestine. For another three months the situation remained critical. But as far as this country was concerned nothing was any longer lost from uncertainty of policy or of purpose. Day by day the three men who embodied the war policy and purpose of the Empire—Lloyd George, Milner, and Wilson—settled that policy as they paced up and down the little garden in Downing Street, accompanied only by the invaluable Hankey and by one other officer who endeavoured, as best he could, to keep a walking note of their decisions. Would that he could have kept a faithful record of those conversations, with their swift-ness and sureness of judgment, their unflinching confidence, their unquenchable humour. Whatever the merits of the controversy that afterwards divided Henry Wilson from the Prime Minister, for both of them the highest point of their

lives will always remain those months when in absolute unity of thought and temper they worked together for victory.

For three years after the Armistice Wilson remained Chief of the Staff. The work of tidying up the odds and ends of little campaigns and more or less peaceful military occupations, and of framing the policy of a shrinking Army, was not too congenial to him, and it was, I think, with a sigh of relief that he walked out of the War Office into Whitehall for the last time. Under other circumstances he might have given his leisure, for a time at any rate, to the peaceful delights of gardening and yachting, and to writing his recollections of the great events through which he had passed. But once again the imperious claim of Ireland decided his course. In his view the policy of the Government in Ireland was simply a weak concession to murder, the certain prelude to immediate anarchy in the South, and to subsequent civil war with the North, leading in the end either to the forcible restoration of the Union or to the break up of the Empire.

If so, it was his clear duty to accept the invitation to join the little phalanx of Ulstermen in Parliament, and to offer his advice and help to the Ulster Government in its task of dealing with outrage and lawlessness. The clearness and vigour of his thought, and the originality of exposition, which had dominated Staff College students and statesmen in conference, could not fail to impress the House of Commons. From the first he made his mark, and became an influence to be reckoned with.

The murderer's pistol has deprived the Empire of the service he might yet have rendered. But it could not take from him the glory of his achievements, or from his friends the memory of a lovable and inspiring character. He could have no more fitting epitaph than the lines from Horace, which he pronounced in memory of fallen comrades only a few minutes before his death—

"The wind sublime eternal soars,
And, scorning human haunts and
earthly shores,
To those whom godlike deeds forbid
to die,
Unbars the gates of immortality."

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXIII. SEPTEMBER 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

A TRAGEDY.

"A resplendent body, decked with jewels and fine raiment, without the seed of Wisdom at its core, is void of worth."

"Treachery should be blotted out : seek out Truth where she lies hid."

—RAMDAS, 1649, a Mahratta, 'Duties of a Warrior.'

ANOTHER nobleman, and this time a real nobleman of England, was arriving in the land of ancient splendour. Following the footsteps of his celebrated parent, he had journeyed to spread his wise counselling among a people wrapped in the exclusiveness of their ignorance. The gangway was lowered, and the statesman, the soldier, the banker, and the gallant ladies—all adventurers—went their way.

I was privileged to have the company of F., a gentleman of Whitehall, who had been accustomed to meet the Englishised Indian in the privacy of his board-room in London, from where he had attempted to visualise a land greater than the countries of Europe in total, peopled by a number of races more foreign to each other than the people of Eng-

land to the people of Siberia, a land shrouded in the mystery of many dark ages, a land of many gods. It was during my wanderings with F., which took us from the great hotel of Bombay to the dirt and flies inseparable from an Eastern bazaar, and back again to the hill above the thousands of twinkling lights and babel of many strange tongues, where iniquity battled with charity, that I heard a pitying voice crying "Sahib—Sahib." Thinking that it was the usual pedlar for "bakshish"—a profitable occupation which in the East has so many followers—I ignored the disturbing voice until I heard the crier make use of my name.

I turned and saw a pitiful figure of an Indian carrying a leather suit-case which he was obviously trying to sell.

To my utter astonishment I found the man to be an old sepoy of my regiment, who had certainly walked with an easier tread on the field of battle than he now walked on the path unknown to the tramp of armed men. I soon learnt that the wretched individual was fighting a greater battle than facing the showers of bullets from Turkish rifles and the spears of frenzied Arabs.

In a pleading tone ex-Sepoy K. H. asked me whether I was in need of a bearer. I knew that a bearer was on his way to join me, but I could soon dispose of him. Ex-Sepoy K. H. pleaded with me to take him, repeatedly assuring me that he would go wherever the Sahib wished. Although I was very anxious to assist any man I had had the privilege of leading into action, and this particular man had at all times proved his worth in action, I hesitated in giving him the post of bearer, for the man was of much higher caste, and his work as a bearer would violate those powerful laws which have built up a wonderful institution lasting through the ages, the violation of which is paid for by the torture of the soul.

On pointing out these difficulties to the man, I discovered that the torture of starvation can break down all barriers, whatever the strength of their might. The man was starving, as also were his wife and child.

Ex-Sepoy K. H. repeated his

oath that he would accompany me anywhere and do all I desired of him. I knew the man to be sincere, and handing him some money, I told him that he was engaged.

A smile, the outward sign of that spirit which had meant so much to us in the trying days of battle, broke on the man's face as he went his way to the hotel.

My thoughts wandered to a seat of early creation near the "light of the desert," and I saw a gallant band of men battling against great odds. Sepoy K. H. was in that band. They fought for honour to the will of the Sahibs, and the Sahibs' will was done.

Then my thoughts returned to the pitiful sight I had a moment ago witnessed.

Later I was to hear of a tragedy, and through it I discovered a greater tragedy.

I had returned from the click of heels and red carpet. I had been an unofficial spectator of the departure of their Excellencies. The display of pomp of power appeals to me in comparison with the personage for whom it is displayed. Here it appeared meet and right, for the departing passengers were not journeying to take from the wealth of circumstance and to bask in the light of their importance, and to limit their understandings according to compliments received. The destination of their Excellencies was Duty. "Non sibi sed patriæ."

Ex-Sepoy K. H. no longer

felt the pangs of hunger, and on being questioned regarding his occupations and travels since our last meeting—when the war-tried regiment left a distant land after many years of absence to return to their native shores to enjoy a rest and to live in the glorious name which they had made—this is the story which he related :—

“Sahib, after we had returned to India, we were told the sad news that our regiment would be turned into a training battalion, and many of us would be discharged. We could not understand this, for we had gained many battle distinctions, and the regiment had a great record even before the war, and we had received special praise for our seven years of fighting service during the Great War. We were all very grieved; so were all the Sahibs, but it was the hukum of the greater Sahibs.

“The day came when I was handed my discharge, and with a heavy heart I made my way to my people, who had attended to my little piece of ground during my long absence. I arrived to find despair greeting me. The small piece of ground was scorched, and was not yielding even one blade of grass. My people were old and nearly starving. With the exception of a few rupees, I handed over all my money to my old people, and the following morning I rolled my blanket and left the land from which

I had expected much, and from which I had received nothing but sorrow.

“Many regimental *walas* were in a like heart. In all their homes sorrow spread like a plague.

“I left the fields of my youth for the great city. When we were passing through Bombay I had noticed several *ex-sepoys* now serving as policemen, and now I thought I should still have the pleasure of serving the Sahibs. I made my way to the *burra* Police Sahib, but he could not give me any work, as there were hundreds of *ex-sepoys* still waiting employment in the same capacity. I was indeed afflicted.

“Aged and withered by grief and disappointment, I made my way to the bazaar in order to buy a little food. Here I was pained by the base custom of the bazaar *walas*. Some of the shopkeepers refused to serve me because I was wearing some old uniform which the Sahib had given me before I was discharged from the regiment. Loitering about the bazaar were many *Ghandi* *walas*, with a manner of those who have plenty and unheeding of the pitying plight of others.

“After many hours of search I found a shopkeeper who was willing to sell the necessities to appease my ravenous hunger. The shopkeeper heavily laboured his reasons for offering me the goods at double the ordinary prices. I was not

wearing a Ghandi cap. Befriended by devils, such was the excuse of those already besotted in greed for losing their respect and pity for the poor and needy.

"I thought of my war days, and remembered how much care the Sahib had taken to make the Arab bazaar walas sell their goods to the sepoys at a reasonable charge. Why did the Sahib refuse to make such orders here ?

"My pocket was light, my heart was laden with sorrow and anger as I threw back the goods and went my way to discover one who did not harbour corruption within him. After some hours' search, such an one I found. His small shop was tucked away at the end of an alley. He was an old man of some fifty years, who appeared to have fared well but not too greedily. Unhappily he related how the Ghandi walas had threatened to destroy his wares should he be discovered selling to other than those with sympathy towards them.

"Making certain that no Ghandi walas were in sight, the old shopkeeper gave me a little atta and sugar, and indicated that if I would visit his shop at night he would supply me with as much food as I desired. He was a poor man, but he would sell to me at the ordinary price. Delivering many thanks, I returned from the bazaar to await the night in glad anticipation.

"Away from the crowded and dirty bazaar men were merrily working on the decorations. It was a grand sight showing many colours. The Prince Sahib was coming, and great would be the rejoicings. Many sepoys would be able to stand in honoured reverence. Those who had served under a Sahib would receive much kindness, and would now be able to raise their voices in loud applause and thankfulness to greet their Prince.

"What were the budmashes saying ? Why did the Sahib allow these Ghandi walas to pour out of their wicked mouths curses against the British Raj ? They were civil walas, and only knew things that were bad ; their minds were governed by their pockets, and they earned their wealth by cheating others.

"Well do I remember the tales of my old people, who could remember the days before the British Sahib arrived. There was much fighting, crime, and disease. Every day a family lost a relative or a friend, either by the knife of the robber or as a victim of plague. The crops grew, but the reaper was Fire. The harvest was a harvest of dead. Headman followed headman, disaster followed disaster, bad kismet governed all.

"The British Sahib came, and punishment followed crime as day follows the night ; the robber surrendered his life with his booty ; the crops were no longer the shrouds of the dead ;

the diseased were comforted, and each man was happy in the day and feared not the night. How ignorant these civil walas are.

"In the late night I retraced my steps towards the bazaar, for I was anxious to purchase food and seek the assistance of the old shopkeeper who had extended his sympathy towards me.

"As I made my way down the dark and deserted alley at the end of which stood the small shop, I repeated to myself the promise which the old man had made, and I thought he might also assist me in other ways. I frequently took notice behind me in order to ensure that I was not being secretly followed.

"Suddenly three men wearing Ghandi caps and armed with knives appeared from behind some cover. I was not armed even with a cane. The odds being much against me I turned to flight, but three other men appeared from behind and cut off my retreat.

"A struggle followed, but its duration was cut short by the weight of the six men. Holding their knives at my throat, they promised to relieve my body of its head if I made any noise. They tore my coat from me, and using bad threats against the British, they reduced the coat to shreds.

"After this they led me towards the shop where I had met the friend of the day. At first I could not fathom their evil, but soon I became

aware of the trap into which I had easily been led.

"As my escort hurried my unwilling feet they argued amongst themselves regarding my worth on this earth. In hell there were many vacancies, and the devils would welcome this one by a special display of torture. This they made particularly clear to me.

"The looseness of their tongues was fastened by the arrival of the old shopkeeper, who greeted me with a peculiar smile. With lamp in hand the shopkeeper led the way behind his hovel. Here the budmashes halted in order to blindfold me. This having been done, the party again pushed me forward. I had been a soldier and had learnt many things. I now counted my steps. One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, three hundred and eighty, and the rags were taken from my eyes.

"I found myself in a dark passage. The shopkeeper moved forward, opened a door, and bade me follow. I turned to find the six budmashes behind me holding their knives in such a way as to indicate the necessity of carrying out the old man's order. I accordingly entered the room, and behind me came the six men.

"I immediately asked the shopkeeper for an explanation of his acts and the acts of the other budmashes.

"If your mind is not filled with pollution and the lies of the cursed foreigners you will readily understand all things,"

replied the old man. 'Satisfy the hunger of your belly, and I will satisfy the hunger of your mind,' he said, and food was quickly placed before me.

"I was exceedingly hungry, but I refused to touch the food of these people of abuse and devils.

"The old man smiled at my refusal to eat, and ordered one of the budmashes to bring a drinking vessel. This vessel he handed to me. It was filled with rupees, and these must have numbered many hundreds. More vessels were produced, and the contents were emptied before me until the floor around me was covered with silver coins.

"'This money is for the payment of those who serve our beloved master, the righter of wrongs, the friend of the poor, the healer of the sick, the one who will turn the accursed British from the land—Ghandi ki jai. What are you going to do, K. H.'—I was surprised at the man knowing my name. 'Ten rupees per day will I give you if you will become one of us. The British rule is over. Slay for us and not make us slay you.'

"Ten rupees per day for a man who is hungry and unbefriended is a gift which is seldom offered, but, praise be to Allah! I still remembered that I had been a soldier, and I also remembered what the British Sahibs had done for me. The old shopkeeper had said that the British rule

was over. The colour of much silver is as wine to the mind, but the thrust of a bayonet makes another colour which can make the sweetest wine taste bitter. Had I a bayonet those standing around me would have tasted the difference.

"I was not going to be corrupted by grand promises, nor was I to be frightened by six budmashes. I spat upon the rupees, and made a dash for the door, but, alas! four knives barred the way, and I was forced back into the room.

"The four men now wanted to murder me, but the old man rebuked them, and said, 'This unfortunate man is burdened by the terrible disease spread by the British tyrants. We can cure this disease with the man under our care. Take him to shelter, and to-morrow I will attend to him.'

"I was placed in a small dark room, and instructed to remain quiet, otherwise I would wake up in hell. My escort then left me, and by listening to their conversation I knew that one of them would guard the door throughout the night.

"In silence I examined what was now my prison. There was a small opening in one of the walls. Through this I looked, and saw a narrow alley below. All was still except for a huddled form of a man whose sleep was being disturbed by mosquitoes or a wicked weight on his mind. I watched the form for some time, and eventually it rose.

The man was one of the budmashes.

"I lay still for about two hours. Now I crept to the door, and hearing the noise of heavy slumber from without, I gradually opened it. The guard lay asleep a few yards from the door, his hand grasping a small knife. Bad kismet was still my companion, for at that moment there was a noise, and the guard opened his eyes.

"I struggled with the man, but he had at the moment of awakening cried for help, and two other budmashes were quickly on the scene. I was bruised considerably, and thrown back into the room. The old man had now arrived, and prevented what might have been my murder.

"'Take heed, K. H.; the devil within you will lead you to hell, and outside this room the road is short for you,' said the old man as he went his way after giving further instructions to the guards.

"Bruised and hungry, wearied and thirsty, I lay down, and comforting myself with cursing the budmashes, went to sleep. I awoke as the light of dawn gave colour and shape to the walls of my prison, and after praying to Allah I patiently waited his will.

"The door was suddenly flung open, and there entered into the room the old shopkeeper and two of the Ghandi walas.

"The old man produced a bag of rupees, and held it

before my eyes and said, 'K. H., you have no money. Here we have plenty for those who will help us in our good work. The splendid talents you have, the strength of your body and the power of your mind, have been used by the foreigners for their wicked purposes. Cease this perversion, and use your great talents in destroying those on whose behalf you have committed many sins. To-day we have ordered our followers of the great cause to parade, and forward we will march against the Parsees. In their houses will be found gold and silver and jewels and wealth untold. All this and much more has been taken from the poor. This forenoon that wealth will be ours. Their temper is well known to us. Any such person who refuses to hand over his wealth to us shall immediately seek for treasure in hell. Any one who rebukes or attempts to hinder us will be treated in a like manner. Ghandi ki jai. Down with the British.'

"The two Ghandi walas repeated the shout of 'Ghandi ki jai; down with the British.'

"'K. H.,' recommenced the old budmash, 'you will now become the friend of the righter of wrongs, and you will join our parade to-day. For every day you give us your service you will receive ten rupees and anything you take from the cursed foreigner, and the Parsees become your rightful property.'

"The old man's face was

pleasant and his tone was soothing, but his face hardened and his tone became harsh when I told him that a line of bayonets would turn all their so-named brave followers into women. I was not concerned with their evil visionary schemes. I had been a soldier. If I had to fight I would fight under the Sahibs, who knew the art of weapons, not those whose bodies ought to be decked with women's clothes.

"I wanted to say much more, but the two budmashes rushed at me with their knives. The old man ordered them to stand away, and said, 'K. H., your thirst and hunger shall devour your foolish mind, and before your tongue loses its speech you will seek pardon, and will become glad to do our bidding.'

"The old man then left the room, and as he went he shouted to the two budmashes to keep strict guard on me. Shortly afterwards the two men also left the room, after having expended all their abuse on me. The door of the room was securely fastened, and from careful listening I knew that one of the men would remain as guard outside the door.

"I looked through the small opening in the wall. Several Ghandi walas were loitering in the alley below. Where were the police, and what were they doing to allow such budmashes to exist? I kept strict watch on the alley, and eventually the old shopkeeper

passed down, followed by the Ghandi walas, who now raised a shout of 'Ghandi ki jai.'

"I silently crept to the door of the room, and found that the guard was still outside. Hungry, thirsty, and anxious, I sat down to examine my mind for a scheme of escape. Hours slowly passed, and the guard still remained in his position.

"Through the hole in the wall there now came the noise of much excitement. The shouts of the budmashes became louder and louder.

"I shouted to the guard outside the room, and told him that I had news for him to hear. The guard, thinking that my hunger and thirst had now become sufficient to force my mind, opened the door. I stood close to the door, and as the budmash entered I threw all my weight against the wood. The door pinned the man, and the man gasped for breath. Suddenly I jumped from my position to the budmash's throat. The man offered but little resistance, for the pressure of the door had left little breath within him. A peculiar noise came from the man's lips, and his eyes became large as he rolled over, and then became still. My hands quickly examined the man's clothing, from which I extracted a few rupees and a small knife. I wished the man had had more rupees.

"Tightly grasping the small knife, I quickly sought for the

alley. Luckily I met no opposition. From the position of the main bazaar there came the shouts of the multitude. Above the uproar of hundreds of voices the loud cry of 'Ghandi ki jai' filled the air.

"Taking careful note of my surroundings I ran from hiding-place to hiding-place, leaving not the one until I had discovered the other. Unfortunately my only way led towards the cry of the budmashes. However, I hoped to escape notice in the numbers.

"Suddenly a man turned into the alley and advanced towards my hiding-place. It was the old shopkeeper. As the old budmash advanced I observed that his face was covered with pleasure. Only one thing could have brought pleasure to such an one sodden in greed and wickedness — stolen shining silver. Had the parade of which the old budmash had so freely boasted taken place? No; the police, I thought, would have prevented it. Perhaps the sight of some one being suddenly hurled into the centre of the mob and murdered for a few earthly possessions had filled the man with joyous evil spirit.

"My muscles hardened as the man came nearer, and a desire filled me to touch at once his throat and his pocket. Three Ghandi walas now turned into the alley, and ran towards the old shopkeeper. If my kismet should prove to be bad I should live but a few

moments longer, for at this time I was not properly concealed. The party passed without taking heed of me. The four men were engaged in happy conversation.

"At this moment the shouts of the mob beyond became louder and louder, and the voices of the four men were lost in the greater noise.

"I wondered at the change which would follow when the four budmashes saw the guard — perhaps the guard still breathed, perhaps he did not. I cared not, for even if his sins had not taken him to his devil, he would be too absorbed in his physical defects to partake in further evil plots. Lucky indeed it was that the room possessed a door.

"I waited until the four men had vanished, and then onwards I made my way. I turned into the main bazaar. All the shops were closed, and groups of budmashes, all wearing the Ghandi cap, stood in earnest conversation.

"In order to avoid as far as possible the notice of the budmashes, I pretended to be lame. From the end of the bazaar the shouts came louder and louder.

"A group of six men came towards me carrying a man covered in blood. As the party passed I heard one of the number soothe the wounded man by reminding him that he had killed two Parsees, and great would be the wealth to be received before the day closed.

"The parade then had taken place. Where were the police, and what had they done? Here the budmashes numbered many, and every mouth was spitting out evil threats against the British Raj. The budmashes thought themselves very brave, and boasted much, but my old platoon could have shown them what is meant by bravery. Alas! the platoon of old comrades was no more. These Ghandi walas would be frightened by the bleat of sheep, and the sight of a Mahratta line would act on them as the wind acts on dust.

"I was very tired, thirsty, and hungry. I turned behind a building for rest and shelter. From my hiding-place I heard muffled voices. Two Ghandi walas were sharing spoils. 'I will take the gold ornaments and you can have all the silver and the money,' said one of them. Apparently this was not a pleasant agreement, for the two men became loud in argument, which was followed by blows. The disturbance attracted attention, and soon the small space became crowded by budmashes, each wanting to be judge.

"Afraid of discovery I rushed from the mob. At the end of the bazaar the Ghandi walas had collected in force, and at intervals each voice opened in fulness to the shout of 'Ghandi ki jai.' Suddenly above the mob a banner unfurled, and at that moment the mass surged forward in

wild excitement like a stream in torrent. The wranglers were now the only ones in sight.

"A few moments passed, and a familiar sound reached my ears. The shouts of the budmashes became weaker and weaker, and the crack of rifles louder and louder.

"Back came the mob. They had ceased to be men—they were now like frightened women. Some fought others for their place of shelter, while others ran wildly on. It was a pleasant sight for me, and was as food to my empty stomach.

"There was now no shouting of 'Ghandi ki jai.' Every mouth was closed with fear. Those of the mob who had reaped their right reward were holding their wounds, and were left deserted by those whose legs were longer. Such is the stuff of these boasting creatures.

"Into sight there now came a number of sepoys, headed by a Sahib. Some of the budmashes hurriedly discarded their Ghandi caps and bolted.

"At this moment some budmash fired a rifle, and shots began to whistle through the air. I was soon reminded that my position was unsafe, and I was obliged to retreat in the way of the budmashes.

"Eventually I got clear of the bazaar, and after many hours I worked my way behind the soldiers and police. I told my story to one of the policemen, but he said that he had heard many similar stories that day. However, I was now clear of the budmashes, and

as I thought of the budmash and the door I became happy.

"Late that day I met good fortune, for I saw a Sahib of the regiment, and my troubles for a time ended. The Sahib told me that my old company commander would soon arrive in Bombay. I went to a babu, who for a few annas promised to tell me when the ship arrived. Many days I went to the babu, and came away without the good news. At last, Sahib, you came. Allah be praised. Allah is good."

Tears filled the eyes of K. H. as he ended his tale. Tears in the eyes of a man whose race never knew fear, a man who had faced death many times, is indeed *mirabile visu*. Deserted by those he had served so well, humbled before all men and all things, his faith in those who had treated him

so scantily was held beyond treaty and bribe. The schemes of politicians, ever hoping to satisfy each sect and creed, will be as shifting sands until the meaning of this "faith" and its creation is known.

I had noticed that ex-Sepoy K. H. had not carried his tale to the end, and it was wise not to remind him that I had found him endeavouring to auction wares from the bazaar, for here cruel starvation had temporarily broken that which governs the pulse of that psychological machine — Caste. Its laws have no pardon for economic conditions, and herein lies a problem of no little magnitude.

This is but one tragedy; there are countless others, and in this tragedy there is to be found a greater tragedy.

Fiat justitia ruat cælum.

ESTORE.

WITH THE GREEKS IN ASIA MINOR.

BY T. M. J.

THE first few months after the declaration of the Armistice in November 1918 were for Turkey a period of unprecedented prosperity.

Despite the scarcity of male labour there had accumulated in the interior of Anatolia great stocks of tobacco, mohair, opium, olive-oil, and hides, all of which were brought down to Constantinople, Smyrna, or the Black Sea ports of Samsoun or Sinope, and exported with feverish haste.

In return, woollen and cotton materials, agricultural implements, and all manufactured goods were in great demand.

The merchants were all busy, and their prosperity was reflected in the steadiness of the exchange and the free circulation of money. European financiers who before the war had been too cautious to invest in Turkey were now anxious to participate in the great boom, safe in the protection of the Allied Financial Control; credit was easy to obtain; and the country appeared to be making a wonderful recovery.

At Constantinople the Allies had entered into authority. The city had been peacefully occupied by Allied troops; the harbour was full of Allied war vessels; but there was no impression of a mailed fist. And as these forces brought large sums of money into the

country, there was no demonstration of hatred towards them.

Politically all was proceeding excellently, and the terms of the Armistice were being faithfully carried out by the Sublime Porte. Troops were demobilised and arms were surrendered as rapidly as possible; but the Ottoman Empire was far-flung, and large tracts of it were practically inaccessible, and much time was therefore necessary before the Turkish Army could be reduced to the new establishment in conformity with the Armistice terms.

The attitude of the Turkish people generally was exceedingly sensible. It was recognised that great mistakes had been made by their former leaders. Since the downfall of Abdul Hamid the machinations of the Comité Union et Progrès and the superb duplicity of Enver Pasha had led Turkey into a perfect maze of domestic and international difficulties; and ultimately they had sold her to the highest bidder in the war. This, however, had been done with admirable diplomacy, and the Turks had regarded the alienation of British friendship, so highly valued before the war, as a regrettable but necessary condition to their retention of Constantinople. As long as their arms were successful the Turks were quite willing to accept Enver at his own

valuation, and had even had engravings of Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara on the back of some of their paper money to commemorate those victories. With the Armistice and the flight of Enver, however, they had searched their own hearts, and found that they were now well rid of him and of the C.U.P. caucus. All things considered, then, they were not so badly off as they might be.

With this state of affairs obtaining the Allied authorities became somewhat lax in the exercise of their rights, and even of natural precautions. A notable example was that of Matchka Armoury at Constantinople. Under the Armistice Treaty the Turks were to surrender all the essential parts of arms, and considerable quantities of ammunition, surplus to the permitted establishment. Under this category came breech-blocks of guns, machine-guns, rifle-bolts, bayonets, and other implements of war. These were duly surrendered; but it was apparently forgotten that the Turks possessed two breech-blocks for each field-piece. They were accordingly left in possession of fully efficient guns, and solely by our own error.

In addition to this, all surrendered armament was stored at the Matchka Armoury, under a Turkish guard and in complete Turkish control. A British officer was permitted to check all arrivals; but who was to say whether anything was ever withdrawn? Later it was discovered that there were continuous and substan-

tial withdrawals of revolvers, machine-guns, and ammunition. It would be interesting to learn who advised General Milne, then commanding at Constantinople, to permit this scheme.

The Grand Vizier, Damad Ferid Pasha, was a very moderate man, and appeared to be anxious to carry out the wishes of the Allies, both in the letter and in the spirit; and he was greatly helped by his Minister for War, Shevket Turgout Pasha, and by Rauf Bey, the Minister of Marine.

Constantinople, policed by the Allies, was a very orderly city. There was comparatively little crime, and the tone of popular morality was good. Unarmed Allied civilians were able to circulate freely in all parts of the city without fear of hostile demonstration from the Turks.

The immediate future of Turkey was therefore much more attractive than that of most of the other belligerent countries while the Supreme Council continued its deliberations at Paris.

Whether the conclusions of the Council were in accordance with, or antagonistic to, the advice of the experts is not quite clear; but a superficial consideration of international history should have convinced any one that to land the Greeks at Smyrna was the last humiliation that should be heaped on the humbled Ottoman people. In the first flush of victorious enthusiasm we had recognised the intensity of the mutual hatred of the Greeks and the Turks,

and when the Allied fleets made their triumphal entry into the Golden Horn, the Greek representative cruiser, the *Averoff*, was delayed twenty-four hours. The paramount influence of M. Venizelos at the Peace Conference is now enfeebled in the Greek hills; but a far greater impulse must have been necessary than a mere belief in Hellenism before the Greeks obtained the great concession to land at Smyrna. In the light of more recent events one is apt to query the source of this great influence, and to feel a certain sympathy with the pertinent question of a daily newspaper, "Are the Greeks in Downing Street?"

The Turks had borne patiently with the occupation of Constantinople, as also with the occupation of Cilicia and Syria, but these were carried out by the British, for whom the Turks had a great respect. They were prepared to support any disability from the Triple Entente, but they had only the greatest contempt for the Greeks, and any insult from that source was insupportable.

When the news of the Greek landing at Smyrna filtered through to Constantinople in June 1919, it was accompanied by many alarming stories of atrocities said to have been committed by the Greek military on the persons and the property of Turkish civilians. As the Greek Army proceeded farther into the interior these stories multiplied a hundred-fold, and it was soon evident that an inquiry must be made.

The occupation of Smyrna gave a great set-back to British prestige amongst the Turks, who thought that it was carried out, or at least superintended, by Admiral Gough-Calthorpe, the British High Commissioner at Constantinople and Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean. Some months later a British officer at Angora attended some charades with Mustapha Kemal Pasha. One of the tableaux was of the Greek landing at Smyrna, with the Greeks dashing about brandishing swords and killing defenceless women and children; while in the background was represented Admiral Calthorpe urging them on to further atrocities. In fact, the sole part played by the High Commissioner was to inform the Turkish Governor of Smyrna that the Greek troops would land there to occupy the town in accordance with the decisions of the Supreme Council.

Following the news of the landing was a time of great anxiety at Constantinople, especially at the end of the great Moslem festival, the Ramazan. The great outcry resulted in a recrudescence of the activities of the C.U.P., with its innumerable associated political organisations. Nothing of note occurred immediately, but plans were laid which led to the formation of the early irregular Chettehs in Anatolia, and ultimately to the present Angora Government, which has forced recognition from the Allies.

The Ottoman Minister of

War, Shevket Turgout Pasha, took an early part in the proceedings. He presented a scheme to the Allied authorities in the capital, whereby Asia Minor was divided into two military areas or Inspectorates—the Yilderim Group, commanded by Kutchuk Djemal Pasha at Konia; and the Eastern Group, commanded by Mustapha Kemal Pasha at Erzerum. Both these officers possessed excellent war records, and authority was given for this redistribution.

Mustapha Kemal proceeded to Erzerum, where he spent a short time in consultation with Kiazim Karabekir Pasha, the Army Corps commander, and then went on to Angora to found the irregular army. A few weeks later Rauf Bey, one of the signatories to the Armistice Treaty, was given permission to go to Angora to intercede with Mustapha Kemal. Having reached his destination, however, he immediately threw in his lot with Mustapha, and we became the laughing-stock of the whole of Asia Minor.

Kutchuk Djemal Pasha took up his command at Konia, and for some considerable time was believed to be loyal to the Central Government at Constantinople. In reality he was proving himself a staunch lieutenant of Mustapha Kemal, and was a great force in the enlistment of irregular troops in his area, and later assisted actively in their training and general organisation.

With the increasing power

of the Angora Government the Ministry of War at Constantinople, which was held responsible for the maintenance of peace in the interior, became no sinecure; it was occupied by a strange sequence of officers, all of whom rapidly discovered the impossibility to serve two masters.

Early in August 1919 I remember a British officer going over to the Ottoman War Office with an important communication from General Milne, which was to be handed to the Minister personally. At this time it was Suleiman Shefik Pasha. At the War Office he went to the Minister's A.D.C., a cavalry colonel, who showed him into the Minister's room. In this room were two men, one in the uniform of a general, the other in civilian clothes, both eating lunch.

The general came forward, saluting gravely, and was handed the letter, with a request for a receipt. He tore open the envelope, scribbled something on it, and handed it to the Britisher. Just outside the door this officer, out of sheer curiosity, examined the writing on the envelope, and found it to be "Suleiman Kemala."

Dismayed by the suspicion that he had given the letter to some one other than the Minister, he hurried to the A.D.C., when the following conversation took place:—

BRITISH OFFICER. "Who are the two people in that room?"

A.D.C. "His Excellency the Minister and a friend."

B.O. "Which is His Excellency?"

A.D.C. "The one in uniform."

B.O. "What is his name?"

A.D.C. (agitatedly). "Monsieur, I do not know; they change so often. He has only been here a few days!"

B.O. (showing him the signature on the envelope). "Whose signature is that?"

A.D.C. "Monsieur, I do not read French!"

This last despite the fact that he spoke with a wonderful Paris accent.

My friend gave up the attempt to obtain satisfaction; the matter turned out to be quite in order. Suleiman Shefik remained in office thirteen days altogether, and my friend retains the envelope as a souvenir.

At this time the Turkish Chettchs were quite unorganised, and consisted chiefly of those villagers from just outside the line of Greek occupation, who were intent on defending their own villages in the event of continued Greek penetration. Had the Greeks been empowered then to advance, the whole Kemalist fabric would have been reduced to nought with the greatest ease.

But the Paris Council, having discovered the great error, commenced to dally; and any charge of intransigence it may now hurl at Mustapha Kemal rebounds dangerously to its credit.

In August an Allied Commission of Inquiry was appointed to inquire into the allegations of atrocities com-

mitted by the Greek Army, most of which were sponsored by the Ottoman Sublime Porte. The President of the Commission was Admiral Mark Bristol, the United States High Commissioner at Constantinople; and the other members were Brig.-General Hare, representing Great Britain; General Dall'Olio, representing Italy; and a French representative. The Commission was very painstaking in its work, and toured the Greek area of occupation to investigate complaints on the spot. From the outset it was patent that many of the stories were founded on fact, though somewhat distorted, and that the behaviour of the Greek investing troops had been scandalous. This view was supported by the impartial testimony of French and British witnesses, and ultimately was the tenor of the Commission's Report.

This Report was presented to the Supreme Council at Paris; but it was felt that no good could proceed from its publication, and that considerable harm might follow. The Report was accordingly suppressed, which caused a French officer to remark to me, slapping his fob angrily—

"Huh! Venizelos porte Lloyd George dans sa poche . . . et peut-être Clemenceau dans l'autre!"

A few months later, however, it was published verbatim by an Italian newspaper, and copied in full by the cosmopolitan Turkish Press, causing a very painful sensation.

One happy result followed from the findings of the Commission, and that was the decision to place the Hellenic Forces in Anatolia under the command of General Sir George Milne, the British Commander-in-Chief at Constantinople. Advanced General Headquarters were established at Smyrna, with General P. L. Hanbury as Chief Liaison Officer to the Greek Forces.

Shortly after this I went to Smyrna, and thence to Magnesia, to take over from an officer who was anxious to return to England.

Magnesia, the second town of Anatolia, has a population of some 65,000 souls. How this is made up is impossible accurately to tell. There has never been a census in Turkey; all methods of calculating the population are therefore only loose approximations. The Turkish official method is to count the number of houses in every town and village. Each house is then credited with a certain number of occupants, which I believe to be six. To arrive at the approximate population is then a matter of simple multiplication. The Greek estimate is based on information received from the Orthodox priests scattered in every town and village throughout the country.

Since the Treaty of Sèvres the figures received from both sources are grossly exaggerated before publication, for propaganda purposes.

The town stands in the centre of the wide and fertile

Magnesia valley, through which flows the Gediz Chai, the Hermus of other days. The peasantry is hard-working and thrifty, producing from the land an abundance of sultanas and olives. These are sent down to Smyrna, 66 kilometres distant, by the Smyrna-Kasaba and Prolongation Railway.

They are, further, very hospitable, and there is always a warm welcome for the stranger who comes by day. Arriving by night, however, the welcome is apt to be much hotter than one appreciates. Just at this time I was reading Dr Edward Carpenter's 'Civilisation, its Cause and Cure.' Dr Carpenter draws his examples from the North American Indian tribes, but his remarks are equally appropriate to the Turks and the Greeks of Asia Minor. Near the soil they are clean hardy fellows, but their initial steps into civilisation seem to have blighted their chivalry and lowered their standard of morality. Especially is this noticeable in the strong contrast between the agriculturalists and the Turkish bureaucrats, the latter being a particularly contemptible class.

The women are strong and hardy, and take their turn in the fields with the men. At thirty they show signs of their labour under the hot sun of summer and the icy winds of winter, and look to be nearer fifty than thirty.

Sunday is a day of rest for the whole Christian community. In the morning they all go to church, and the rest of the day

is spent promenading the fashionable streets of the town. All are dressed in their Sunday finery, for this is the day when the young men look round for their future wives. It is a simple proceeding, for the marriageable girls wear their dowries around their necks, in the shape of gold pieces on a gold necklet. By a process of elimination, the young man is able to limit the probables to those whose dowry fall between certain figures. Some of the Turkish gold pieces are as large as a five-shilling piece; a necklace of nine or ten of these added a fine pride to the grace of carriage natural to all Greek women.

Dominating the town in the south-eastern corner is the abrupt and forbidding Magnesia Dagh, which is covered with snow for five months in winter, making it very cold indeed. I was frequently told that there were little brown bears on the Dagh, but although I spent many spring days looking for them I never saw one myself. At the foot of the Dagh there are some fine rock carvings, the best being that of Niobe, which faces the railway on the south side travelling east from Magnesia, and about 6 kilometres out of the town. This magnificent piece of work is only distinguishable in a certain light; I have myself failed to distinguish it on several occasions, although I knew its exact position to within a hundred yards.

One of the Seven Churches of yore, Magnesia is now a hot-

bed of pan-Islamic fervour; and it was only the great tact and good influence of the Mutesarîf, Hilmi Bey, which prevented a wholesale massacre of Greek civilians when the news of the landing at Smyrna reached Magnesia.

At this time Magnesia was the headquarters of a Greek Army Corps, where I was taken the next day.

There I was introduced to General Ioannou, the commander of the Army Corps. He was a great, bluff, hearty person, with enormous broad shoulders, and built just like Hindenburg. Those who soldiered at Salonica will remember him well, both for his outstanding presence and for his fine qualities as a leader of men.

The officer I was relieving made this his farewell call, and the General gave him the Medal of Military Merit to commemorate the occasion, at the same time promising me all kinds of honours if only I was kind to them.

The system of decorations in the Greek Army, and the freedom of their bestowal, was rather amusing; and before long strict orders were issued from the War Office that no British officer should accept a Greek decoration except through the proper diplomatic channels. This did not deter the Greeks at all. I remember one officer paying a call on General Paraskevopoulos, the Greek Commander-in-Chief, when suddenly the General rang a bell. Entered an orderly bearing a silver salver on which reposed a medal

in a plush-lined case, together with the usual scroll. The Britisher expressed his gratitude for the honour that was intended for him, but regretted that his Government did not permit him to accept the Order. The Greek was gently insistent, but was met with firmness. Finally Paraskevop, as he was called, took up the case with the medal inside, snapped it to, and handed it to the officer with the remark, "Here you are; put it in your pocket, and keep it as a souvenir!"

On another occasion, when a distinguished General from the War Office motored up to Magnesia from Smyrna, I was sounded by a member of the Greek Staff as to the prospects of a mutual exchange of decorations. All these Greek officers would have changed gladly a breastful of their own "Piccadillies" for a single British honour.

One of my chief duties as a liaison officer was to tour the line held by the Greek forces to see that they did not go beyond the line defined by the Paris Council.

The conditions of this occupation, to my mind, were very unfair to the Greeks. Entrenched opposite their line were the Turkish Irregulars, the forerunners of the present organised Kemalists. These Irregulars, or Chettehs, were allowed to attack the Greeks to their hearts' content, but the Greeks could not attack the Chettehs; and even in a counter-attack the Greeks could only proceed two kilometres, if

I remember correctly, beyond their own line.

Behind the Greek line there was a large amount of espionage, anti-Greek propaganda, and even enlisting for the Chettehs was carried on. Whenever an offender was traced, he had only to take refuge on the railway, which being French property was regarded as neutral territory, and he was safe from arrest.

The Italians were now in unauthorised occupation of Southern Anatolia, and were well disposed toward the Kemalists. A large amount of trade was done with Angora, where the Italians found a ready market for their unused war material. The small fishing village of Adalia became a flourishing port, the terminus of a light railway, and the depot of a very efficient system of motor coastal traders. Banks were opened, and Italian influence became very marked.

The Greeks found this side-door communication with the enemy to be very opprobrious, and tried ineffectually to check it. Resort to the Allies proved equally abortive, and the relations between Italy and Greece became strained.

Naturally both officers and men were irritated by these disabilities, and their temper was sorely tried. Under the strain the old cry of "Zeto Venizelos!" which had been the watchword of the Army, was much less frequently heard, as he was blamed for having made this bad bargain at Paris. The eagerness with which they

always pointed out the injustice of the situation to me made me think at one time that they thought me responsible for the position; I was always requested to make strong representations to General Milne that the conditions be changed.

Despite this vague suspicion, I found the Greek officers and men to be quite good fellows, ready to support any hardship, always smiling and hospitable. Behind the line, however, they used too much scent and too little soap to be good company.

Their kindness and hospitality were most in evidence at Eastertide.

The Greek Orthodox Church keeps Good Friday as a day of mourning and fasting; this continues till Easter Day, which is one of great eating and rejoicing. All kinds of preparations are made for the feast, the most interesting being the quaint rustic arbours which are built of tree-trunks and branches to form dining-halls. Some of them were large enough to accommodate a whole company of infantry, with tables and benches inside. In many cases the trees had been dragged several miles across country, but the men were well pleased with the results, and thought them worth the trouble.

At this time of the year the Greeks recall those who have fallen in the war, and outside every dug-out was a small memorial to a brother or friend of the soldier; on each memorial was the name of the dead, and from a pole, stuck in the highest point of the edifice,

flew a small flag bearing the name of the soldier's home village.

Here and there a whole unit had combined to raise a memorial to its fallen. One of these I saw with the 37th Regiment consisted of a huge mound moulded into the shape of a shell. It was bordered with white stone chipped small, which meant many hours of laborious work with the entrenching-tool. The nose-cap was done in red stone. On the shell, which was about 50 yards long by 15 yards wide, were the names of every officer and man who had been killed in the Balkan War, the Great War at Salonica, or in the guerilla fighting in Anatolia. It was a magnificent piece of work, and the builders were childishly happy when I praised it warmly.

The Easter Feast is a wonderful affair, when every one is honour bound to over-eat.

For some time previous to Easter there is a great buying of lambs, and at the door of every Greek house, tent, or dug-out is tied a little lamb. All day long some one can be seen tempting the little thing to eat a little more, and again a little more, till by Easter the lamb looks fit to burst. It is then killed by cutting the throat, and the blood is carefully treasured for staining hard-boiled eggs.

There is a splendid game played with these eggs. It is played by two persons, one of whom holds his egg with the point protruding upwards be-

tween the thumb and first finger; the second holds his egg to stick out downwards between the little finger and the palm of the hand. No. 2 now brings his egg down as hard as he can, point to point, on No. 1's. The winner is the owner of the egg which bears no scar from the blow; he then goes on from victory to victory, shouting aloud the number of his conquests and challenging opposition. It is just like the game of "Conquerors" we used to play as boys, only the Greek men all play the egg-game.

Accidents will happen, of course, and in one contest I saw the eggs had not been boiled at all, and the results were disastrous to the players.

The most interesting place in my area was Sardis. Up till the end of April 1920, Sardis was behind the Turkish line, and it would have been very difficult indeed to drive the Turks out of this position. But one morning the Greeks looked round to find that the Turks had decamped during the night, and immediately moved forward to occupy the place. Within a few hours I was there myself.

Sardis, the ancient capital of Asia, is said to have had a population of two millions; to-day it is a collection of about a dozen dirty mud huts. On the eastern side rises abruptly the Acropolis with walls ten feet thick, and each stone of which is a memorial to some notable citizen of two thousand years ago. From the summit

there is a wonderful view, extending right up to Alashehr, the old Philadelphia. In the valley behind us rippled the little Sart Chai where Croesus found all his gold when it was the Paktalos. With Colonel Kondylis, a very fine type of Greek officer, I did a little prospecting round here, but we had no luck at all, although I read recently that some fifty old gold coins have been found.

Before the war Sardis was being excavated by some American archæologists under Mr Buckler. Much progress had been made, especially on the Temple of the Aphrodytes. A considerable number of very fine groups of statuary had been unearthed, some remarkable glazed pottery and metalwork, all of which had been housed in the small museum built on the western slope of the Acropolis and facing the excavations.

Inside this museum I found a pitiful disorder. All the marbles and pottery had been destroyed, and I stood knee-deep in the fragments of most priceless relics. Lying about were the groups of statuary, all defaced and ruined, the clean glistening surface of the break bearing witness that the outrage was of very recent occurrence. It was an example of vandalism equalled only by the Hunnish Kultur of Louvain and Rheims.

However decadent the Greeks may be, politically and morally, they are well versed in their own history and mythology, and were extremely angry

at this outrage; and I had every sympathy with them.

At the time Dr E. H. Freshfield was at Smyrna, and I tried to persuade him to come up to look at the wreck at Sardis. Unfortunately Dr Freshfield had already made his arrangements to return to England, and a just estimate of the damage is still missing.

The country around Sardis is devoted to opium-growing, and this led to a curious experience. I was riding along a path through the heart of the opium district, and all round me, as far as the eye could reach, and all huddled together, bloomed one blood-red carpet of poppies. This brilliant red everywhere had an extraordinary effect, making me feel nervous and horrible. Stepan, my Armenian groom, was affected, as also was my horse Gilbert. After some time I could stand it no more, and turned Gilbert back along the path we had come; he gave a whinny of joy at this, while even Stepan growled approval.

Stepan, the Armenian, was a fine chap.

He came originally from Ismidt, and during the terrible massacres in 1915, he and all his family were tied to other Armenians and marched south. This was a favourite method of murder with the Turks, who gave no food to their wretched prisoners; and when any of them dropped on the road from sheer fatigue or hunger or thirst, he was left to be dragged along by those tied to him—

and ultimately left, more dead than alive, on the roadside to the mercies of the prowling pariahs of the wastes.

Stepan's party marched thus down through Eregli, over the Taurus, Stepan carrying his young baby sister on his back. At Aleppo, with the little one still on his shoulder, his father and mother having died on the roadside, Stepan escaped, and during the war wandered from place to place, seeking the wherewithal to sustain life in the miserable bodies of himself and his sister.

When he was with me Stepan's pay was eighteen Turkish pounds a month; of this he kept fifty piastres, and sent the whole of the remainder to his sister in Constantinople.

Although I have a small opinion of Armenians as a nation, I think Stepan was a fine fellow, and made sacrifices cheerfully which many of us would find too great a trial.

The same day as the incident in the poppy lands, I was riding past a regiment of infantry resting on the roadside, when suddenly I heard a voice sing out—

“Say, you Englishman!”

I halted and turned, and spoke to a particularly dirty soldier coming towards me.

“Say,” he asked, “how did you know I was American?”

And he poured out his story to me. He had gone to America some eighteen months before the war with his family, and had taken out his first papers for American citizenship. When

the Armistice was declared his mother had insisted on revisiting Greece, to see the friends of her youth and her old home; but as soon as he had set foot ashore at the Piræus he had been conscripted into the Greek Army.

He was very angry at it all, but I found that his story was quite a common one, and that most of these people had gone to America to dodge the war when Greece came into it.

At Smyrna life went on much as usual. Trade was largely restricted by the state of war existing in the interior, but socially there was very little change from before the Greek occupation. The Greek military had done good work in the town, where traffic control and general cleanliness were far superior to the standard maintained by the Turks.

In the summer of 1920 an effort was made to introduce summer time. Every one accepted it except the Greek naval and military authorities, and it seemed too much to expect that a people who had retained the old Julian calendar would accept without a struggle the new daylight-saving scheme.

There were large numbers of Greek sailors and soldiers in the town, and slowly the shops and cafés reverted to the old system as retained by their best customers.

There are two railways at Smyrna—the Smyrna-Kassaba, a French railway, and the Ottoman Aidin, which is English. Both started off with the summer time, but after

some weeks the French line went back to the old system, while the Aidin railway stood by Mr Willett. And so things went on. One never knew what time was being kept by any one, and every one was heartily glad when winter came, bringing with it a little sanity on the question.

The British communities at Boudja and Bournabat were charming and extremely kind. Although I only spent an occasional leave at Smyrna, I can never think of my stay in Anatolia without recalling with gratitude the many kindnesses shown me by our people at Smyrna.

Meanwhile discontent was spreading, owing to the continued inaction and continuous little shows of the Chettehs, and anxiety at being kept in the Army when the other Allied soldiers had returned to civil life. The increasing unpopularity of Venizelos led to his downfall, and the British liaison was withdrawn from the Greek Army.

Unfortunately the Greeks take their politics much too seriously, and a short time ago when I revisited Turkey I met General Ioannou, a pronounced Venizelist, a refugee at Constantinople.

Throughout the Aidin vilayet the Greeks were endeavouring to set the seal of their absolute and permanent authority. In the spring of 1921, when they commenced their offensive, all kinds of goods, materials, and transport were requisitioned at Smyrna, even from

Allied subjects. The French and Italian consuls protested vigorously against this procedure, with the result that their nationals were exempted from the process. When Sir Harry Lamb, the British High Commissioner in the occupied territory, was approached by the British subjects, he declared that the Greeks had every right to requisition, and the British were left without protection. Fearing to alienate the sympathy of the influential Smyrna British, the Greeks did not persist in their requisition.

The Greek High Commissioner, M. Sterghiades, an extremely able man, was the only notable Greek official who survived the Venizelos régime. Under the new constitution of the Aidin vilayet as the autonomous state of Ionia, M. Sterghiades is the first Harmost.

In the Capital the Turks were very bitter against the Treaty of Sèvres, and the British were rather unpopular for the moral support we had lent to the Greeks.

An English lady was in a party being shown over the Seraglio grounds, and was very patronising, much to the annoyance of the courteous old Turkish officer who was their guide. At one point the party was served with coffee in beautiful gold cups, centuries old. The lady thought the coffee was quite nice, quite nice indeed; and the cups too were very nice. A little later they were given tea in one of the little shady arbours. The lady

thought the tea was quite nice, very nice indeed, and the cups too were nice. Turning to the old Turk, she asked—

“Tell me, where does this china come from?”

“From Sèvres, madame, the same place as the Treaty,” was the cutting reply.

There was never any fear of a Kemalist attack on the capital, which was garrisoned by several thousand Allied troops, while the White Ensign and the Tricolour floated proudly from many warships in the Bosphorus. Once or twice, however, small bands of the rebels came down to the shores of the Bosphorus, near the Black Sea end, and once had the temerity to fire a few rifle-shots at the *Iron Duke*, the admiral's flagship, then lying off the Embassy at Therapia!

At Smyrna I learnt that my friend Kondylis, also a well-known adherent of M. Venizelos, had departed in haste. And this was the fate of scores of the officers I had known, good fellows all, and with splendid war records.

In their places I found a new set of officers. They had no war medals, no Allied decorations. They had spent the war either in gaol at Athens or at the Berlin Court. Further, they had no knowledge of modern warfare, of the value of machine-guns, and the uses of grenades; and therein lies the secret of their woeful failure against the forces of Mustapha Kemal.

HOODOO ARMSTRONG.

BY A. SADLER.

I.

NINETY-NINE men out of a hundred will tell you, and tell you with indignation, that they are not superstitious. They will, however, carefully refrain from walking under a ladder, and they will wreck your polished floor with the salt they throw over their shoulders to propitiate the gods for a slight accident with the salt-cellar. Mulligan informed me grimly that he wasn't superstitious either, but he added that he didn't sleep thirteen in a bed if he could avoid it. If you fly in the face of Providence, he opined, there is always a chance of Providence letting you down.

This is the story of Hoodoo Armstrong, and it is vouched for by many men who use the sea: MacMurdoch, the Chairman of the Gray Anchor Steamship Company, for one, and Captain Michael Mulligan, Commodore of the Gray Anchor Line, for another. Mates, bo'suns, and common seamen beyond numbering will tell you that the tale is undercoloured. But if you haven't it in your heart to see fairies lurking sometimes in the purple hill haze, or to feel the eyes of evil spirits peering from a sinister ruin; if you've never had runs of

luck, good or ill, I pray you read no further.

Jack Armstrong was just twenty-five, and mate of the Gray Anchor s.s. *Firefly*. He was the Line's most promising officer, watched over with parental affection by Alexander MacMurdoch, and there was every prospect that he would fly his flag as commodore at an age when most skippers are looking for their first command. In fact, his quiver was crammed tight with fortune's golden arrows, and he had the sense to appreciate his good luck and be glad.

But there came an evening at Monte Moreno when Armstrong stepped into the Cal de Diaz in search of amusement. He found its promise in a pair of bright devil-may-care eyes which challenged his while he stood indecisively outside the door of the English hotel. And he was not to know that the girl had a *novio*, with whom she had quarrelled, and that in suggesting a visit to the Casa Carranza, where dancing was in progress, she had the pagan intention of dangling the chance acquaintance before the eyes of that short-tempered and thoroughly outraged personage.

The music was good, and

Isobel Zapeta danced divinely, but they had scarcely made one round of the crowded room when Armstrong's companion dropped his arm, and he found himself confronted by a fiend, clothed in the uniform of the mercantile marine.

Carlo Pacheco (the lean bronzed fury spat out the name as if it were a spell of great potency) danced and raved, while the orchestra slipped into a caterwaul and fell silent, and the dancers crowded round, expostulating or jeering according to their natures, but all talking. The few British seamen in the throng didn't talk; they looked significantly at each other and edged quietly round to guard Armstrong's back. It's as well to have a friend at your back when fur is flying in Monte Moreno.

Armstrong, feeling and looking very foolish, gazed down at Carlo Pacheco, and remarked uncomfortably, but still good-naturedly, "If you don't scream so much, old son, I'll perhaps hear what you're saying. What's got you?"

Pacheco switched into English, and what happened thereafter was not very clear. He got out a few unclean words, and then Armstrong sprang in, driving for the Latin's jaw with a smashing left. The blow missed, and the two circled about each other warily. There was silence in the Casa but for quick-drawn breaths and the half-restrained sobs of Isobel Zapeta, who crouched white

and trembling inside the ring of spectators.

The two closed again; there was a flash of steel in the whirlwind of legs and arms, a shout of warning from the British seamen, and then the combatants crashed to the floor. They lay there, locked together, while one might count a score; then Armstrong rose to his feet and stood looking down at his adversary. The ivory hilt of a dagger protruded from Carlo Pacheco's chest, and across his white waistcoat a dark stain spread slowly.

Isobel Zapeta emitted a piercing scream, and, springing forward, gathered the head of the unconscious man to her breast. Her eyes glittered hatred at Armstrong, and she shrilled at the audience to slay him. But the audience contented itself with maledictions, for the British mercantile marine had closed its ranks and buttoned its jackets.

An inspector of police, gold-laced and clanking a huge sabre at his side, pushed through the throng. He was, he said, regretfully compelled to take the assailant to the *calabozo*.

"Try, admiral," suggested a lean Yankee, who had attached himself to the group, "but you'll need to take us too."

The inspector gesticulated with energy. He declaimed with eloquence of the majesty of the law. "If it is necessary," he yelled, "I will have the whole garrison of Monte Moreno to arrest that man."

"Fetch 'em along, son," the Yankee drawled. "There ain't many, are there? We'll be glad to meet them out in the *plaza*; but the taxpayers of this one-horsed port won't thank you when they're paying for a new garrison."

"The law is the law."

"Your law is worth a nickel, son, a ten-cent piece at the outside. You have the word of the Great Republic, and of the Empire on which the sun never sets, that our friend will appear in court to-morrow at nine. Now shut up; your man isn't dead yet."

Carlo Pacheco had stirred. His lips moved, and his fingers plucked fitfully at the dagger hilt. Suddenly he sat bolt upright, and the crowd fell back to right and left; only the girl clung more tightly, sobbing and babbling like a frightened child. Pacheco turned, and, casting off her arms, spat a word in her face. She stood up swaying, and the spangles of her gaudy frock glittered about her like evil eyes. She sank fainting to the floor, and none moved to touch her.

The dying man's eyes, blazing more wildly, roved about the circle of pale faces till they came to rest on Armstrong. Then he spoke in a flat impersonal tone, which carried like the voice of fate to all corners of the crowded hall.

"See, you have killed a man, and a woman you have sent to be gathered to the brothel where she belongs. No man will ever again ask her hand.

They will not kill you, but the time comes when you will wish they had. My body goes, but Carlo Pacheco lives. Be sure, *señor teniente*, that I am with you. Waking or sleeping, by land or sea, I shall watch over you. A week—perhaps years—when the time is ripe, I shall strike. When the sun is shining—and there is no speck in the sky—remember me."

With a last burst of strength, he snatched the dagger from his breast and hurled it at Armstrong's feet. He caught his knees up to his chin, and, with his arms locked about his ankles, sat rocking back and forth, while blood and foam flecked his bearded lips. His glazing eyes were fastened on Armstrong's face, and when he presently toppled over on his side, he still kept his head screwed round till the last agony caught him, and the soul screamed as it tore loose from the clay that was already chilling.

"Gee!" the American gasped, and the rest of the sailors shrank back a little.

Armstrong turned on them, and his face looked lined and old. "It won't hurt you," he said. "Let's get out of this."

"At nine o'clock, *señor teniente*," the inspector warned, twitching anxiously at his sleeve.

"Yes—damn you! I'll be there."

The sailors moved out through the throng, which parted hastily to let them pass.

"It's murder all right, sir," Armstrong explained dully, as he stood in his captain's cabin in the small hours of the morning. "He drew the knife, of course, but I didn't have to kill him. I don't know—I was quite calm too. I just wanted to kill him, I suppose. Lying there on the floor he just looked as if he ought to be killed. I got his wrist—so, and twisted his blade down. I waited a second or so while the point pricked his skin, and the fear jumped in his eyes—then I drove down."

Captain Johnson, stout and bearded, a family man, and an enthusiastic chapel-goer, wiped his shiny bald pate with a flowered silk handkerchief, while he chewed a good cigar to shreds.

"You're dreaming," he said at last, and his thin voice seemed to plead for confirmation. "You couldn't have done it, lad, and in any case there's no need to tell that story to a magistrate. I'll get down to see the consul early, and we'll have everything fixed up in half an hour."

"We're leaving at twelve," he added, irritable under the probe of his nonconformist conscience. "I'm not going to lose my tide for your nonsense, so see to it you keep your mouth shut."

The morning sun was cutting great bars of silver dust through the garish and musty splendour of the dock-magistrate's grimy court when Armstrong stepped into the box. The little leathery-

faced magistrate was obviously no lover of *gringos*, and had he had no support beyond the testimony of his witnesses, the sailor would probably have found his way to some prison hole, where he would have been forgotten by the warders and left for rats to dispose of. But the British and American consuls had seats on the bench, and the magistrate was obliged to stick a little closer to law than was usually his habit.

It was the prisoner himself who seemed to be doing his best to wreck his own case. Big and bronzed, his head lost in the gloom above a belt of sunshine, his freckled hands gripped on the dock-rail, he made no move except to throw a furtive glance over his shoulder occasionally, as if to look at some one who shared the narrow space with him.

There were a dozen witnesses for the defence, and only the inspector of police for the prosecution. The magistrate heard them one after another, and then turned on Armstrong.

"Do you say it was an accident?" he demanded.

"I say nothing, señor," the sailor replied indifferently.

"Whose was the knife?"

"Carlo Pacheco's."

"Do you suggest he killed himself?" the magistrate pursued, his mummy-like face twisted into a snarl.

"I suggest nothing, señor."

"Are the statements made by your witnesses true?" Armstrong shrugged his

shoulders. "They tell what they saw, señor."

The magistrate glanced at the consuls, whose faces were expressionless and yet strangely threatening. He waved his hands.

"Tchut! Two men and one woman; a fight, and only one man and one woman left. It happens every day." Leaning towards Armstrong with a burst of undisguised malevolence, he added, "For you, I should advise you to get to sea soon, and to stay away from Monte Moreno. Carlo Pacheco may have left friends less easy to deal with than the law."

And that, apparently, was the end of the incident. It was many weeks before Armstrong got the thought of Carlo Pacheco out of his head, many weeks before he lost a habit of suddenly turning in his tracks as if to face a pursuer; but he was young and healthy, and time and occupation will cure most troubles.

Under the eagle eye of MacMurdoch he continued to climb, causing not a little heart-burning by the rapidity of

his ascent. He joined the select company of the Gray Anchor captains, and forged along till he commanded the *Dumfries*, the pick of the Company's cargo craft.

"Captain Armstrong, commodore of our cargo fleet," MacMurdoch would say with fatherly pride when introducing his protégé to strangers—and he would add when the captain's back was turned, "There's a sound head on those broad shoulders, sir, and a mighty big heart in that barrel of a chest. Jack Armstrong is going further than he knows."

And then came his appointment to the *Peruvian* on the Liverpool-New York service. His hard climbing was over; he had negotiated the worst of the way. To the summit was an easy grade. You may not be superstitious, but you will admit, at least, it was a strange coincidence that at this point things began to happen for which no sailor, and for which not even hard-headed old MacMurdoch, makes any effort to find practical cause.

II.

Jack Armstrong, on that first night out from the Mersey, was a happy man as he leaned over the bridge-rail watching the lights of an inward bound Cunarder, from whose open ports the music of the parting concerts was

borne across the water. From the saloon deck behind him came the tinkle of a piano; beneath his feet the mighty engines of his craft throbbed steadily. About the decks couples were walking, with badinage and laughter, and from

the steerage a salvation army man could be heard, taking up already a desperate struggle for the souls of two hundred cosmopolitan emigrants.

Six hundred or more lives, and a million pounds worth of property were there, entrusted to his skill, courage, and judgment; the thought filled him with a sense of power—power which is above mere show and pride.

Baillie, the first officer, came on the bridge, and he looked the dreaming skipper over with an affectionate smile. He was almost old enough to be Armstrong's father, but he realised without bitterness his own limitations, and had no thought of jealousy.

"Feeling good, sir?" he asked.

"I should say so. Good ship, good crew, full passenger list, and fair weather setting in by the look of those stars. Who wouldn't be glad? There just isn't the smallest midge in the ointment, Baillie. I shall——"

He broke off, and spun round on his heel. No fly in the ointment? No speck in the sky? As though flashed on a screen, he saw a picture of that night of years before in the Casa Carranza, and the breath of approaching disaster, ice cold, swept by and left him shivering. A cloud had descended, and seemed to shut him off from the rest of the world. Something seemed to stand at his back. There was nothing, of course, and he

knew there was nothing, but there remained a sense of being under constant scrutiny, which he felt would presently drive him mad.

He pulled himself together and, turning to the amazed mate, gave him a few curt instructions. Then, "I'll turn in, I think," he said. "Better get some sleep while there's a chance; I don't think this weather is going to last."

Sleep! He daren't sleep, and couldn't if he would, and he haunted the bridge till his officers were at their wits' end.

On the fourth night out, Baillie had occasion to visit the captain's cabin. He found him fully dressed, dozing fitfully in his bunk, and went quietly forward and touched his shoulder. Armstrong leaped from the bed, and stark fear glittered in his eyes. Baillie, decent soul, looked away while the skipper got himself in hand and tried to laugh off an awkward situation. Then, having been sorely tried in these last few days, he took the privilege of age and friendship.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked. "Trouble's always better shared, and you know you can trust any of us to back you—back you till all's blue."

"Matter? How do you mean?" Armstrong avoided the kindly eyes peering at him from under ragged mist-dewed brows.

"Well, you're just—if you'll excuse me saying so, sir—getting on everybody's nerves. If

it was any one but you, we'd think you couldn't trust us, the way you jump into everybody's watches. The quarter-masters notice, that means gossip in the fore-castle, and it's not good, sir. Can't we help ? ”

“No—it's nothing, Baillie,” with a desperate effort after a bantering tone. “I'm sorry I've worried you fellows. I'm nervous with my first liner, I expect.”

Which, as poor Baillie used afterwards to remark, shaking his wooden but honest old head sorrowfully, was “a damned clumsy lie. Imagine Jack Armstrong nervous with anything but a girl ! ”

Dawn of the sixth day came, with a strong north-westerly gale, driving sleet showers, and a choppy unpleasant sea. It blew and drizzled off and on throughout the day, and passengers—with the exception of the usual exercise-fiends, who circled conscientiously within the shelter of the weather screens—kept to saloons and cabins. As the afternoon advanced the wind freshened, and officers and crew prepared for a thoroughly uncomfortable night.

At sunset the wrack of flying leaden clouds parted for a space, and the sun tossed a last bod-ing glance across the water, as some old tyrant might make a final survey of his victim, and pass out of the prison, leaving the work of execution to other hands. The wind fell to fitful gusts and died away. Sleet began to fall, and thickened

gradually to snow, through which the *Peruvian's* questing light penetrated scarcely the length of her own decks.

Armstrong stood on the bridge, a fury of rebellion in his heart, for a shadow lay over the *Peruvian* like some filthy miasma, and he felt that, if he reached back, he would touch that undefinable horror brooding ever behind him. He rang for three-quarter speed, then for half, and the ship battled her way unhappily through the darkness, her syren booming a constant warning across the waters. The night was full of the quiet eerie hissing of falling snow.

Armstrong felt the approaching danger before it struck. Some power beyond his will sent his hand to the telegraph, to snap the indicator back to “Stop.” Summers, the second, turned with an exclamation of surprise, but before the engine-room bell could clang an acknowledgment of the order, the *Peruvian* checked in her course with a violence which flung skipper and mate off their feet. She checked, and then leaped forward again, seeming to climb up and over some obstacle.

The skipper slithered to his feet as a great cry of alarm wailed up from the crowded saloons. He rang “Dead slow ahead,” and sprang to the indicators controlling collision doors.

“Pipe all hands to stations, Mr Baillie,” he ordered, as the mate, hatless and coatless,

dashed on the bridge. "Go and pacify the passengers, and find out what's the damage."

His face was pale, and his voice had a terrible quality of quiet, like the stillness which broods over the world when the massed battalions of heaven are assembling for the Storm of Storms.

But the story of that black tempestuous night and haggard anxious dawn is printed in the files of every newspaper in the land. Read there how the incipient panic was quelled, and how throughout the dark hours concerts proceeded on all decks, while the wireless flashed a call for help far and wide through the snow-clogged heavens, and the *Peruvian* settled gradually lower, as if weary of the struggle.

The sea was too high for boats to be launched without considerable risk, and Armstrong decided to take the hazard of waiting aboard for the arrival of the *Adrianople*, who had flung back a message of cheer as she swung her razor bows and tore through the scud of the north-west to the help of her stricken sister.

Read in the files how the captain moved among the passengers with cheering words and ready laughter. Laughter—with that awful shadow press-

ing down as if to suffocate his very soul. Breakfast was served quietly at six in the morning, while the bulkheads bulged under the weight of hungry waters, which would not much longer be denied. Then the *Adrianople* bore down, and swung into position to windward, and—by consummate seamanship, the marine inquiry said—every soul was saved.

But "Our Own Correspondent" did not see the molten fury and dread blazing in Armstrong's eyes as he stood for a moment alone on the *Peruvian's* quaking decks, while the last boat hung impatiently under the sagging counter. And neither "Our Own Correspondent," nor the almost omniscient court, arrived at any satisfactory conclusion as to the cause of the disaster.

But sailor-men were not so diffident. Baillie was right when he said there would be gossip in the forecastle. Within a week the old story of Carlo Pacheco, liberally embroidered, was on its round of the Liverpool boarding-houses, preparatory to taking its swift way to all the ports of the Seven Seas. Sailor-men shook their weather-worn heads over mugs and glasses; they knew what she'd struck—yes, sir, they knew.

III.

Armstrong had climbed fast. He topped the peak, and after the first few steps downward

he dropped like a stone into the abyss.

MacMurdoch had been ren-

dered yet more proud of his protégé by his handling of the *Peruvian* catastrophe, but the Company hadn't an unlimited selection of liners at its disposal, and Armstrong reverted to the command of the *Dumfries*. On her next trip—to Vera Cruz—the *Dumfries* was harassed by continual bad weather and by engine troubles, which were inexplicable in one of the best-found craft on the trans-Atlantic service. She was three days behind her schedule when she steamed into port.

During the brief stay at Vera Cruz, Armstrong managed a violent and quite inexcusable quarrel with his Company's South American agents. His sense of humour and sense of proportion seemed to have deserted him utterly; he devilled the souls of officers and crew, and frightened dago stevedores out of their scanty wits. And for all his exertions he lost a day in loading, and left for home four days behind time.

Almost within hail of the Mersey a black fog descended on the world, through which the *Dumfries* crawled warily. Far to starboard a destroyer's syren yelped; to port, some huge liner bayed its dismay as it fumbled blindly southwards.

Out of the shrouding mist high black bows sprang silently and at speed. A yell of terror burst from the look-out, engine-room bells jangled, and Armstrong himself sprang to the wheel—too late. They avoided an end-on collision by a miracle, but the stem of the stranger

carried away the *Dumfries's* bulwarks like paper, before she swung off and was lost in the fog.

There came the unmistakable thud of engines going astern, and for a moment the strange craft hovered ghost-like in the mist. Armstrong heard an angry voice demand, "What the devil have you stopped for? Are you mad?"

"No, sir, but we must have holed that boat badly."

"Damn them—let them sink," came the harsh retort. "It'll be worse than sinking for us, if we wait."

The propeller thrashed the water again, and the stranger disappeared finally in the mist, while the officer of the watch on the *Dumfries's* bridge blasphemed helplessly. But there was a savage sympathy in the tone of the skipper as he remarked, "I wonder what's driving that poor devil beyond the bounds of decency."

Holed the *Dumfries* certainly was—holed and settling rapidly by the head, for all the pumps could do, but they kept her afloat long enough to run her ashore. The other ship was never traced, and along the waterside seamen wagged their heads wisely, and opined that she sailed from a torrid port, and that her captain, mate, and crew were combined in the ghost of one dago, who roamed the sea with eight inches of good steel festering in his incinerated chest.

And then MacMurdoch fired Armstrong. It was the last

thing in the world he wanted to do, but the sailor, who had lost his sense of humour, and was now just a seething cauldron of bitterness and mistrust, didn't give him a chance. MacMurdoch was patient, superhumanly patient, but finally he grew angry.

"Gang yer ain gait tae the de'il," he cried at the close of a sultry interview, anger and sorrow driving him back on the tongue of his youth. "I've stood mair frae ye than I wad tak frae ma ain son, and I'll stand nae mair. Hap when ye've drunk the dregs and mumbled the crust, there'll come a pickle sense tae yer thick heid. The door's ahint ye, lad."

Just for a moment, a glimpse of the old Armstrong glimmered up through the bitter waters that had closed over his head.

"I'm sorry, sir," he muttered, the blood mounting to his haggard cheeks, his feverish eyes glistening. "You see, I've got to tackle this thing myself; I'll kill it, or it'll kill me, but I've got to face it alone."

MacMurdoch regained his command of English, and his voice was soft as he answered, "You're daft, laddie, but go your daft way. Hold a straight course, and remember that Alexander MacMurdoch has always a berth waiting for you—aye! and a home for you if it comes to that."

They gripped hands, and Armstrong passed foot-loose into the world to battle to the death with a ghost.

He had one more command, the five-hundred-ton coaster, *Sarah Sands*, and he piled her old bones on Lundy Island in one of those white fogs that leap without warning on shipping in the Bristol Channel.

From this point he was tossed down-stream, appearing to the eyes of friends occasionally as the face of a drowned corpse shows for a moment in an eddy ere it swirls again on its course. His name became a byword in all the ports of the world. "Hoodoo" Armstrong, they called him; and it isn't good to remember all he suffered in those days when he dwelt in forecastles, or wandered stranded about the beaches and quays in search of work, while the cloud of notoriety about his name thickened.

In Pahang he half-killed a hazing skipper of the old school, who was foolish enough to lift a hand to him. Outside Sydney Harbour an unfortunate difference of opinion with a second officer ended by that gentleman being thrown overboard in shark-infested waters. Those and tales of the sort—some true and more false—kept his memory green among seafarers.

A man with less steel in his composition would have gone to the dogs through the bottom of a tumbler. Armstrong, isolated from the ordinary fellowship of his kind by the cloud which hovered constantly over his head, and feeling always at his back a darker

shadow, almost as of a tangible pursuer, put his head down and smashed blindly into what-ever obstructed his path.

There were many old friends who would have been glad to lend a helping hand, but sympathy was as a red rag to the charging bull.

"I don't steal, beg, or borrow. I keep a decent shirt on my back and avoid prison. What has it got to do with you, or anybody else, how I manage it?"

This was in reply to a kindly inquiry by an old skipper who, as a matter of fact, had a good billet up his sleeve. Armstrong, needless to say, didn't get that billet, and a few encounters of a similar kind reduced the number of his open friends to zero.

Convinced of the supernatural character of the forces arrayed against him, rendered savage by an endless series of disasters, he never quite despaired of ultimate victory. Periodically he would arrive in a port, and, emerging from some dingy fore-castle, take up his quarters at a decent resort of officers, and from there make the round of the local offices in search of a command. But he was too well known, and seldom got inside the clerical guards of those sanctuaries from which jobs are wrested. He was, in fact, become a marine nuisance, on a par with the man who always wants a fiver for "a dead sure thing," or the bibulous rogue who only wants "sixpence for a bed."

At last the wheel of fate brought him to lean against a bollard by the waterside at Tilbury. It was a day more worthy of December parentage than that of early September, which, according to the calendar, it claimed. A ghostly grey fog lay low along the river, above which a mast moved here and there without visible material means of propulsion. The tumbled roofs of Gravesend on the farther shore huddled dismally together, as if they sensed the turn of the year and the coming of the bleak winter days.

Even the sea, which finds use for the meanest servant, would soon have nothing to offer . . . except . . . Many as good a man as he had loosed the burdensome pack-strings of life, and gone down to rest in those muddy waters. Perhaps if he dropped over there, he might at last evade the relentless shadow which brooded over him waking or sleeping. Perhaps . . .

The anxious calls of vessels great and small feeling their way out to sea cut through his musings, and he drew himself up shuddering. The sea called him, but not to rest. He felt he hated her, but, as a good man may follow a bad woman, loathing the servitude, he would follow the sea to the end.

He wandered aimlessly a few steps down the quay, till he found, confronting him, a dingy office building. Above the blistered door a worn sign notified

the world that the Imperial Ocean Ways Company dwelt within. The controller, evidently a modest man, had added his imperial patronymic in the smallest possible print—Levi Levinstein.

Armstrong looked the temple of imperialism over without enthusiasm, but, remembering that fat snails frequently house in battered shells, he pushed open the door.

The interior was dilapidated. A few cheap filing clips hanging from shelf-hooks held bunches of dusty bills of lading. Worm-eaten shelves were stacked with grimy binders of shipping office relics. The blue distempered walls were patched with damp, and from the low ceiling slabs of plaster hung precariously. A single yellow gas-jet flickered dejectedly above a dirty counter, behind which a pimply-faced youth, clad in a grey suit three sizes too small for him, sat on a high stool, immersed in a yellow-covered book.

Armstrong's entrance had not been observed, and his impulse was to slip away, for here was obviously no berth for a seaman. But his eye caught the word "Private" on a heavy door behind the counter, and he was seized with curiosity as to what the inner sanctum of this dreary bourne might harbour.

"Are you the manager?" he asked.

The boy almost fell off his stool, while, with dexterity born of long practice, he shot

his literature into an inner pocket.

"Assistant," he answered, lifting a pair of wicked eyes to the seaman's face. "D'you want anything?"

"I was looking for a berth."

The boy appraised the applicant with precocious and insolent calm, and then reached back to the private door and pulled it open an inch or two.

"Fellow looking for a berth, dad; cut of a skipper. Want to see him?"

"Yes—send him in."

Armstrong lifted the counter-flap and passed through, and the sudden change of surroundings took his breath away. Outside was squalor and poverty; within was luxury, gross and in execrable taste, but a safe index of wealth, from the expensive pictures in priceless frames flung higgledy-piggledy about the walls, to the fabulous carpet, which screamed its monstrous price through a month's accumulation of dirt.

The sailor's eyes blinked in the glare of a strong desk lamp, shaded in such a way as to throw its rays full on his face, and he was unable to see the presiding deity of this temple of blatancy until the deity himself tipped down the shade. Then he discovered the ship-owner sitting behind a flat-topped desk, a capacious tray holding whisky and soda at his right hand, and a large box of cigars at his left. Armstrong, with a half-formed suspicion hardening to a certainty, made a rapid inspection of

Levi Levinstein, while waiting for authority to step forward.

The facial misfortunes of his tribe were, in Levi's case, exaggerated to the verge of caricature. He possessed an inordinate nose, a huge slack mouth, and a pendulous underlip which quivered continuously, like that of a dozing cab-horse. His head was bald, and on top of the shining crown was a gnarled excrescence of about the size of a pigeon's egg, from which straggled a few dark hairs. But his bulging lidless eyes were the most distasteful feature of his distasteful physiognomy.

"Well, captain, come and sit down."

The sailor took a round-turn on his temper, for he realised that there was every possibility that he would presently add a ship-owner to the growing list of the victims of his fury.

"Take a pew, captain, and help 'self to a smoke. So you're looking for a berth?"

Armstrong took the proffered weed, and intimated that he was looking for a berth—looking hard.

"Been out long?"

"Haven't rated higher than quartermaster for two years, but you'll find my papers are O.K."

The cloud seemed momentarily to lift a little from his brain, and the shadow at his back faded. A glimmering of a long-vanished sense of humour welled up from the depths, and a grim spark flashed in his eye.

He had come low indeed if Levi Levinstein could regard him as a likely tool, but the Jew should certainly repent the blunder. He flung the suggestion of a whine into his voice.

"My papers are O.K., sir; not a mark against me. Rotten bad luck—that's all."

"Bad luck? Of course!" Levi's voice was hearty, and to show that his sympathy was something more than mere words he mixed a stiff whisky-and-soda, and pushed it towards his intended victim.

"What was the trouble?"

The sailor touched lightly on the misfortunes of the *Peruvian*, the *Dumfries*, and the *Sarah Sands*. Levi tucked his pudgy thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, and sucked in as much of his underlip as he could accommodate without choking.

"It's a terrible list of misfortunes, captain. You couldn't expect to get a quarter-deck berth anywhere with that pedigree tied to your tail. Can I see your papers?"

Armstrong produced the waterproof wallet, and his whine was unmistakable.

"Just rotten bad luck, sir. Extra-master's ticket, and not a black mark against me. Enough to drive a man to the devil."

The ship-owner opened the wallet, and his eyes flashed wickedly as they fell on the name.

"Ah! I was trying to remember while you were telling

me your troubles. Hoodoo Armstrong, isn't it ? ”

“Just fishwives’ tales, sir,” Armstrong protested. “If you give me a ship you’ll find I haven’t forgotten my job.”

Levi replenished the glasses.

“Well—I’ve got a boat,” he began doubtfully. “I had made all arrangements, and she’s manned except for the skipper. The fool who was to command her has let me down at the last minute, and he’s going to be mighty sorry before he’s much older. I’m looking for a man, but he must be the right sort.”

The seaman’s grey eyes flamed for a moment, but Levinstein was looking at the ceiling, and by the time he brought his gaze down again Armstrong’s face was calm and anxious to please.

“Particular sort of job, sir ? ” There was less of the respectful captain in the tone, and more of a subtle familiarity, which pleased Mr Levinstein under the circumstances. The interview was progressing as such interviews should.

“Well, she’s a queer craft,” the owner explained. “She’s past her use at sea, but I can’t afford to lay by a boat while she’ll drag her bones about on the surface and haul freight. The *Imperator* will do that at the moment, but she needs careful handling.”

“Where’s she bound ? ”

“Monte Moreno.”

Armstrong laughed raucously, and Levinstein jumped nervously in his chair.

“What’s the matter ? ”

“Just the name.” The sailor’s teeth gleamed in a crooked smile. “My hoodoo comes from Monte Moreno, and, if there’s any worth in sailors’ tales, your boat’s chance of life with me on her bridge isn’t worth a foot of spun-yarn.”

Levinstein’s gross carcase shifted from side to side in the swivel chair, while he chewed reflectively at the butt of a fresh cigar.

“Why not get it off your chest ? ” Armstrong prodded. “Your reputation may not be much, but, even if I blabbed, I don’t reckon anybody is likely to take my word against yours.”

The Jew lit his cigar and hid behind a screen of blue smoke.

“There’s nothing for you to blab about. I like you, my boy. I offer you a berth, but I tell you frankly she’s a leaky tub ; in fact, she’s rotten, but she passes the port authorities as seaworthy, and,” significantly, “I promise you her boats are first-class.”

“And ship and cargo are over-insured about ten times, I suppose ? ”

“That’s nothing to do with you, my boy,” Levinstein rasped. “You’re on the rocks, and I’m lending a hand to tow you off. I’m offering you a questionable craft, because it’s the best I can do at the moment. The old hooker should make Monte Moreno safe enough, but I think it’s more

than likely she'll founder on the home trip. The essence of seamanship is the ability to ensure that if a boat must sink, it does so at the right time and in the right place; I take you to be a smart seaman."

"And it looks to me, so far, as if you propose to tow me off my present rocks just to land me on worse ones. I can't, with my reputation, afford to lose another boat, Mr Levinstein."

"Of course you can't. Well, the pay is twenty pounds a month, and if you should have the misfortune to lose the ship, there'd be a bonus of five hundred pounds, payable immediately you come ashore; that, and the command of a more reliable vessel waiting for you. It might be worth a little risk, captain—eh?"

Levinstein's smoke screen was very thick as he made the offer; otherwise he might have felt doubts if Armstrong was quite the tool he sought, but the sailor's next query set his mind at rest.

"Are any of the crew in on this?"

The gross evil face showed for a moment, grinning through an eddy of smoke, and vanished again.

"You should cultivate a discreet tongue, captain. Your mate, name of Mulligan, is also being towed off the rocks. I have pointed out the disadvan-

tages to him, and, in consideration of the risks, he gets two hundred and fifty pounds if there's an accident. What do you think?"

"I think it's mighty likely there'll be an accident."

Levinstein came out of the cloud to replenish his companion's glass. "Are you on, captain?" he demanded, studying the sailor out of the corners of hooded eyes.

Armstrong nodded.

"And you're satisfied with your mate?"

"I'll have to be, I suppose. If you'll let me have my papers, I'll get along and see about my kit. I'll be going down on the tide to-morrow afternoon."

Levinstein yelled to his son, who produced the necessary documents.

"I'm glad to have met you, captain," he said as they parted, "and I think the meeting is lucky for us both. Nobody can say that Levi Levinstein doesn't play straight with his friends, and," a nasty note informed the thick voice, "nobody can say he has let Levi Levinstein down without living to be mighty sorry for it. Pleasant voyage, captain."

Perhaps the smoke accounted for the fact that Armstrong failed to see the outstretched paw. Levi thought so anyhow, but then he was used to having his hand overlooked, even by his tools.

IV.

Armstrong sought his new command early. It was low water, and he stood for a while gazing down on that floating wreck, the s.s. *Imperator*. It was impossible to say what colours she originally affected, or whether she was iron-decked or wooden. At present she bore the neutral tints of the dirt which cluttered her from stem to stern. Long trails of rust streamed away from her hawse-holes, and every outlet was similarly decorated. Her smoke-stack was crusted with the salt of previous voyages, but a splash of new paint showed where the house-mark of a recent owner had been clumsily obliterated.

The bridge seemed as dirty as the deck. It was innocent of canvas, and the telegraph and binnacle casings were green. Several members of the crew were sitting about on the fore-hatch having breakfast, and they looked unpromising, even to a man who had long since ceased to be finicky about crews.

Surveying that filthy tub, the old blind rage against fate shook him for a moment, but he crushed the feeling down. Hailing the deck, he requested the presence of Mr Mulligan on the wharf.

Mulligan came nimbly up the ladder, and Armstrong surveyed him with a disfavour which he made no effort to hide. The mate was a big

Irishman, blue-eyed and ruddy. The lower half of his face was clothed in a ragged beard and moustache, through the gaps of which strong white teeth grinned insolently. His patched reefer had several buttons missing; his dirty grey trousers were holed at the knee, and broken canvas shoes exposed brazenly a large and dirty toe.

"Are you the mate of that dust-bin?" Armstrong asked.

"I am that," in a thick Hibernian brogue. "Pretty little thing, isn't she? Are you the skipper?"

"I'm the skipper, and we sail this afternoon with the tide. Now keep your mouth shut, and listen to me."

The skipper's voice had fallen thin and cold, and his eyes glinted dangerously. Mulligan, brought up at the start of a cheerful sally, stood with his mouth open, while his new chief offered, calmly and dispassionately, his considered opinion of ship and crew, and finally of the mate himself.

"The *Imperator* may be a scrap-can on her way to the bottom, but she's got to look something better than a hog-wallow while she stays afloat," he concluded. "You can start that crew to work as soon as you please."

"You're mighty particular, aren't you?" Mulligan blazed.

"I am. My name is Arm-

strong — Hoodoo Armstrong ; you may have heard of me."

The mate's breath whistled through his teeth, for he was an Irishman as well as a sailor.

"Holy virgin!" he breathed at last. "That Shonk is wasting his money. There wasn't any need to pay."

The captain turned on his heel, and before he was clear of the wharf he heard the roar of the Irishman's voice driving the crew to work.

The same evening he paced the bridge of his new command, while the Nore blinked solemnly astern, and further away, the lights along the Sheerness wall faded to a blur. Mulligan had bestirred himself to some purpose. There was a suggestion of glow about the bridge's brass-work, and a wind-screen, worn but clean, had been stretched. It was now possible to ascertain that the *Imperator* had wooden decks. The hatch-covers had been decently fastened, and ropes properly coiled down.

Best of all, the mate had found a respectable suit of clothes, had washed, and trimmed his beard and moustache. Really, after renovation, he wasn't a bad-looking fellow. There was more devil in his eyes than is good for any man, but on second inspection Armstrong was inclined to hope.

The mate came on the bridge, and after a word or two, the skipper went below to get supper and make the acquaintance of his chief engineer.

Heathcote—the chief—had been designed for something far above his present station, and a glance at his flabby features and yellow rheumy eyes told the way the best of his brains and all his chances had gone.

They talked desultorily of shore matters till Armstrong asked, "Well, what do you think of her, chief? Is she very bad?"

Heathcote's dreary eyes fired. He had been waiting for the cue to pour forth his grievances.

"It's a crime to send a rat to sea in her," he swore. "The shaft jumps in the bed-plates at every revolution; most of the machinery is iron scrap, and damn badly cared for even as scrap. Fifty pounds pressure in the boilers is likely to take us to glory. I haven't a stoker fit to shovel anything but road-scrappings, and you couldn't trust my second to fill grease-caps. What the devil the Board—hell!"

His trained ear had caught a discordant note in the hammer and clank of the struggling engines, and he fled.

Armstrong finished his supper, and started to go on deck, but at the cabin door he turned, and, as if speaking to somebody, muttered savagely to the empty room—

"See—you can get me no lower. I'm taken for a black-guard by Levinstein and Mulligan, and I'm here with a commission to sink this rotten scow. But I'll take her out and back if I float her into

Tilbury, bottom up. Hoodoo or no hoodoo, she goes safe back to Tilbury, or I and everybody in her will drown." And, with a weird survival of youth peeping through his bitterness, he added, "Be damned to you!"

The principal duty of a mate at sea is to keep the crew employed, and Mulligan performed that task with marvelous efficiency. The Lizard lay abeam when the men made their first, and only, effort to kick against the pricks. They assembled on the fore-hatch below the bridge, and their spokesman, a half-caste whose predominating strain was Cockney, expressed their desire to interview the captain.

Armstrong pulled down the weather-screen, and looked grimly over the motley collection, from the half-caste to the negro cook. He looked them over one by one in silence, while they shifted uneasily on their feet.

"What's your trouble?" he asked at last.

The half-caste broke forth into a bitter and fantastic harangue on the inequalities and injustices of the social structure, but the skipper broke ruthlessly into a lurid period.

"Your politics don't matter a pin to me. What's your grievance?"

"We're 'azed, sir; 'azed like cattle. We ain't got time to breathe, much less smoke a pipe, or write a letter 'ome."

"Food good enough for you?"

"Ow! yes. We ain't got no complaint about grub."

"You're just overworked?"

"Yes, sir, 'azed like cattle, sir, and it's a played-out game, and we ain't going to stand for it. We'll work eight hours a day, and no more."

The Cockney was gaining courage from the captain's moderation. Perhaps, after all, he wasn't so dangerous as he looked.

Armstrong turned to Mulligan, and his eyes were bitter and his lips twisted into a contemptuous smile.

"If the men have got time to work up this sort of tomfoolery, you can't be doing your job, Mr Mate," he said. "See to it; I don't expect to complain twice."

He left the bridge, and Mulligan followed his retreating form with wondering eyes, in which there was the dawn of a grudging admiration.

"Begob! that's a queer one," he murmured. Then to the uncomfortable crew, "Wait just one minute, m'boys, and I'll attend to you."

But the boys didn't wait. Discipline was established bloodlessly on deck; below decks, where sleepless nights and lack of whisky had made Heathcote irritable, it was established with the help of a spanner, not without some letting of blood.

So the days ran into weeks, while the *Imperator*, growing ever cleaner, ploughed her slow way through fair weather and foul. Mulligan hinted no more

of the bond of wickedness which united him to the skipper. He repeated to himself more than once, after a glance into age-old weary eyes, that Armstrong was a queer one. He presumed that the accident, which was to earn him two hundred and fifty good pounds, would happen in due course, but in the meantime the subject was taboo. And the Irishman wasn't very happy himself, for he was in process of resuscitating a conscience, which gnawed with persistent and razor-sharp teeth.

At last they raised the long lean coast, and slid over an oily sea between the two volcanic rocks which stand on either side of the harbour mouth like the ruined pillars of a gigantic gateway. The pilot came aboard, and Armstrong was free to watch the waterfront widening to view, as the *Imperator* waddled in past the chain of low islets forming the natural breakwater, and swung hard to starboard into the harbour proper.

Eight years had passed since he had looked on this scene, but it might have been a lapse of ages, and he was startled to find how little the face of things had changed. The tall warehouses along the quays, with their thousands of dirty windows; the picturesque but filthy native town behind; and above, perched on the benches of the Sierra foothills, the palaces of the provincial notables,—nothing seemed to have changed, even

by so much as the addition of a coat of paint.

The *Imperator* crawled in, keeping the buoys of the fairway close to starboard, as the seven-thousand-tonner *Glasgow*, of the Gray Anchor Line, came grandly out led by her two obsequious tugs; and there was a lump in Armstrong's throat as he looked up from his floating scrap-heap at the black opulent sheer.

"All fast, sir!"

He snapped the indicator over. The gangway was lowered, and the local representative of the Imperial Ocean Ways Company—another Levinstein—stepped aboard. He closed one knowing eye as he shook the captain's hand, but gave no other sign of knowledge as he took over the ship's papers. He had the return cargo ready for loading—mainly canned fruit, he said—with one of those fleshy Levinstein chuckles. There was trouble in the port, but he thought the *Imperator* should be able to clear in ten days. Meantime, if the captain chanced to be a stranger to Monte Moreno—— The skipper intimated that he was not a stranger, and from the tone Levinstein felt it would be injudicious to press hospitality.

That evening, while Armstrong stood at the foot of the gangway, undecided where to go or what to do, a tatterdemalion dock-policeman sidled up and began to dribble out information in the wheedling tones of his kind. The

republic, it appeared, was only now recovering from its annual revolution. The new authority was not yet firm in the saddle, and the ex-president was still at large with the exchequer accounts and most of the treasury's negotiable securities. Under the circumstances back streets should be avoided, but if the honourable captain sought amusement, the victorious and regenerated nation danced and supped at the Casa Veglia and the Casa Carranza. Those were the more respectable haunts; if the most excellent captain——

Armstrong tossed a coin into the greedy palm. Casa Carranza! Why not? He flung a defiant laugh over his shoulder, and stepped out smartly through the cluttered docks into the moon-kissed orchard country, and along the dusty white road, down which motor-cars, open mule-drawn carriages, and fiery saddle-animals bore the rejoicing members of the victorious party.

Casa Carranza seemed unchanged too. The same resplendent flunkey stood under the great lamp, to fling open the doors with a bow, which conveyed to every visitor that he alone was the expected guest. It might almost have been the same black-pointed mule team waiting at the foot of the broad white steps for some wealthy reveller.

He wandered into the dining-room in search of a table. The place was crowded with excited parties, who were more

concerned with politics than food, but occupied tables as if there were no more serious object in life than to chatter. His sleeve was twitched by a nimble waiter, and he was hurried into a place at a small table where a girl sat alone. He mumbled an excuse while running his eye down the bill-of-fare; then as the waiter disappeared he looked up, and found himself gazing into the wide astounded eyes of Isobel Zapeta.

Señorita Zapeta was at this time about twenty-six. The fresh daring beauty which had lured Armstrong was gone. The framework of beauty remained, but lines that were once soft had hardened; lips made for laughter were set as if they had never been taught to smile; and great dark eyes, which years ago had sparkled devil-may-care with joy, glowed now devil-may-care with bitterness and disappointment.

It seemed they would never speak, but at last the girl's voice broke the spell, and her tone held a note of compassion which went straight to Armstrong's heart.

"So, señor, Carlo kept his word to you too; tell me."

Armstrong, haltingly at first, but warming to the work as he progressed, told the story.

"And so, señorita," he concluded, "I have fallen as low as I can go. I am taken for something between a murderer and a thief, and I command the leakiest marine coffin ever allowed out of dock."

The food before them was untouched, and the anxious waiter came forward in the pause, to know what was wrong with the viands of a house famed for its cookery from Cape Horn to the Hudson. Armstrong waved him away, and Isobel Zapeta began to speak in her weird, liquid half-Spanish, half-English.

Carlo Pacheco's word had been fulfilled. The young men came no more to the Casa Zapeta, and the girls who had envied her pointed the finger of scorn. There was money enough, but her mother, growing old, had become miserly, and nagged continually over the expense of keeping a daughter who brought no grist to the family mill. Isobel was growing old too, and nothing happened from day to day. Life was an endless, flat, unwinding road through a sordid country.

"For you, señor," she said, "there was always the fight; for me, nothing but to grow old and ugly, and slowly to rot to death. Do you know what I did last night?"

The blood, leaping under the dusky pallor of her skin, lent her face an illusive suggestion of fulness and youth. Her eyes were frank, though they met the sailor's through a mist of shamed tears.

"I walked in the Street of Windows," she said. "I watched the men and girls come and go, and I envied them. There is life of a sort there, señor. It doesn't last

long, but the flame burns high."

"As a lamp smokes, señorita," Armstrong's voice was husky with feeling. "You must never go there again—never."

She said nothing, and after a long silence he asked, "Are we friends, señorita?"

Her glance enveloped him in a mantle of warmth, and, for the first time since the night of the *Peruvian* disaster, he saw the cloud that hovered over him thin to transparency.

"But yes, señor. For an hour, years ago, I hated you, but I have prayed for you many times since then."

Armstrong signed to the waiter.

"Take this stuff away. No offence to the house, steward. We'll start supper over again." Then to the girl, "I shall be in port for ten days. What you need is a holiday, and so do I. We shall do something every day of those ten."

She regarded him doubtfully for perhaps a minute, and then the light of starved youth flickered and flamed in the weary eyes, and she raised her glass.

"To our holiday, Señor Armstrong," she said.

By the time they parted on the evening of the ninth day, Destiny had woven the threads of two lives together, for good or ill. Armstrong held the girl's hands in his, while the stars, which see all things, gazed down, pityingly perhaps, through the warm scented dusk.

"I'll go straight to Alex.

ander MacMurdoch when I get home," the sailor said. "He'll give me a ship for Monte Moreno, if he has to build one specially for the job, and then you're coming home with me. You are not afraid?"

"Only that you will not come back," Isobel Zapeta replied sadly, "that you will not come back, or that perhaps afterwards—you may be sorry you came."

Armstrong kissed her lips.

V.

The pillars of Monte Moreno were lost in the smother astern, and a gorgeous sunset gilded the tossing sea, as the *Imperator* crammed her ancient nose doggedly into the first rush of a rattling south-wester. Armstrong laughed light-heartedly as a flurry of spray lashed his face, and Mulligan, who stood beside him on the bridge, watched him in wonder.

A new skipper had come aboard, keen-eyed and sharp-tongued as of yore, but with his tone purged of much acid; with a youthfulness in his eyes and a capacity for laughter which Mulligan had not seen before. The Irishman could find nothing to justify cheerfulness. He loathed enigmas, and wished heartily that the skipper would settle the business for which they were both engaged.

Fresh tar glistened on the tattered flanks of the *Imperator*. Her smoke-stack boasted a new coat of paint. Her brass fittings gleamed in the sunset glow, and her decks showed good clean planking of which no boat need be ashamed. Surveying his handiwork, Mulligan felt a thrill of

pride, and he reflected bitterly that it was a damned shame to trig the old lady up in bridal clothes just to bury her.

She lifted to a comber, shaking herself pridefully as the water raced over her shining decks and roared through the scuppers.

"By hoky! she might be half her age, sir," Mulligan said.

"Yes—she'll do. If Heathcote can keep the screw turning, and he's certainly worked wonders in that engine-room, we'll pull her through anything."

As the skipper walked away the mate's perplexity deepened. For himself—he was already heartily ashamed of a bargain struck when he was, to put it mildly, not sober. But a bargain is a bargain, made drunk or sober, and had he wished to cry off he should have done so before the ship left port. But what the deuce game was the skipper playing?

The boat battled cheerfully along, knocking off her laborious twelve knots, with nothing worse than stiffish breezes to try her staying powers, till the

grey northern waters were reached. Then the perverse gods of wind and sea turned with fury on what looked like an easy victim.

The wind came from the south-west. For a day and a night it blew without let at almost hurricane force, and they rode it out. Forecastle and cabins were awash most of the time; the galley was swept clean. The deck-house under the bridge disappeared in splinters, leaving the bridge jutting out in mid-air, poised apparently on nothing. The bulwarks, battered and breached, looked like the shattered palisading of some barbarian battle camp. But the boats—with the exception of the dingy—had escaped miraculously.

For thirty-six hours there was neither food nor sleep for any man, but they came through with only one casualty—a Swede deck hand, whose ribs were cracked.

The skipper and Mulligan, their faces grey with salt, their eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep and the constant lash of stinging spray, looked at each other, and Armstrong smiled.

"Well, her decks are whole, and she seems to be riding fairly lightly. Test the well, and then get the watches straight. Bennett"—to the second—"get busy on the galley. Every man-jack of that crew deserves a medal; the least we can do is feed 'em."

"She's started something

somewhere, sir," Mulligan reported when he returned. "Making water pretty fast, and the men are in no condition to go to the pumps. Left to herself she'll sink in a few hours; just about stay on the surface long enough to make it safe for the boats."

"Who told you the crew wasn't fit to pump?"

"My judgment, sir." Mulligan tried to meet the skipper's eye, and failed.

"Well, your judgment isn't worth much, Mr Mate, and your opinion isn't likely to be asked again between here and Tilbury. The *Imperator* is going into Tilbury Dock, if we row her in bottom up. You can start the pumps right away. I don't reckon you'll have any trouble with the crew. If your blood-money worries you——"

Amazement filled Mulligan's eyes at the captain's first words, but amazement was displaced by a sparkle of wild humour.

"Saved—b' the lord," he cried. "Have you planted this on Leinstein from the start, sir?"

"I have."

Mulligan burst into a whoop of joy, but sobered suddenly, and under the grey of the brine his face flushed with shame.

"I wish I could say my share was a plant too, sir. But I was drunk—I'd like you to believe I was drunk, sir."

"I'll take your word." The skipper held out his hand, which the mate gripped. "Now, jump to those pumps."

Armstrong leaned over the

bridge rail, his tired eyes roving about the tossing water. There was a tender smile on his lips, for a shadow stood at his elbow, but this time it was the shadow of a señorita with dark southern eyes, warm and bright, and sometimes he thought he could feel the tips of gentle fingers on his sleeve.

The *Imperator* got a further hammering in the channel. Raw, bitter winter weather held the sea, and the last struggle round the Foreland was enough to try the souls of giants, but the nondescript crew stood to their work like heroes. Flayed and frozen, hands raw to the bone, half fed, and with practically no sleep, they fought undaunted. And Mulligan proved the fine temper of the metal hidden under his accumulation of dross. He worked twice as hard as any of them, didn't seem to sleep at all, and thrived on the regimen.

And so at last the old hulk fought her way into the smooth waters of the estuary, and as she drew further up-river where the traffic was crowded, she became the butt of every tug-boat and barge that came within hail. She was indeed a sight for the gods, with her bridge dancing wildly on air, her bulwarks flat, and her smoke-stack leaning drunkenly to port. She bore herself with a touching senile dignity too, and her exhaust coughed and spat defiance. And Mulligan, and such of the crew as had voices left, gave as good as they got in the way of riverine courtesies.

Heavy with her freight of sea-water, she was warped into dock from her last voyage. Levinstein's son stood on the quay-side, but he went swiftly to earth in the Imperial Ocean Ways Company's office, and when Armstrong and Mulligan entered, he was at his place on the tall stool.

"Father in?" Armstrong asked.

"Yes—and he's waiting for you."

"Keep the door, Mulligan, and don't let that youth go out."

Before the door of the inner sanctuary closed, the Irishman caught sight of the livid face of the Jew. Thereafter, he heard high words, and then sounds of strife, about which he commented cheerfully to Levinstein junior.

"Silly of your dad to make a fuss, you know. There goes his whisky tray. Gee! that sounds like the bookcase. Why doesn't the old sinner act reasonable? There won't be a stick of furniture left in the office if this goes on—and not much of dad either."

Silence again, and presently the door opened. The Jew was sitting at his desk. His collar was broken, his cheeks wet with tears, and saliva ran horribly from the corners of his slack mouth.

"I've a cheque for five hundred, for the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society," Armstrong said cheerfully, "and here," handing over a parcel of notes, "two hundred and fifty to pay

bonuses to the crew, on the scale we arranged. Fix up everything; I'm for Liverpool by the first train, and you'll probably hear from me."

"Suppose Levinstein makes trouble?"

Armstrong handed the Irishman a knotted scourge of handy size. "To be administered at such times and in such quantities as may be necessary," he said.

"I was afraid you were never coming back, laddie," MacMurdoch sighed, when Armstrong had told him his story and made his halting request for employment.

"I'm not asking for a skipper's berth, sir; I don't deserve anything, but if you can start me off as mate, and the job's a permanency, I can go over and marry Isobel, and we'll trust to time and luck to help us up the ladder."

"Will you so?" MacMurdoch chuckled. "Time and luck and a daft old fool named

Alexander MacMurdoch, who was once over-fond of your mother, will see that you get the *Ethiopian* sailing for Monte Moreno six weeks from now. The daft old fool will see that the captain's apartments are made fit for a honeymoon, but de'il knows, laddie, where I'll find a crew. Your fame doesn't die, and it's my belief there's pub-crawlers making a mighty good thing out of your Hoodoo."

"I'll find the men, sir. I'll wire Mulligan to hold the *Imperator's* crew, and we can pick up the few extra hands somehow, or do without."

MacMurdoch nodded, and squashed Armstrong's thanks before they were half uttered.

"Are you come to stay and be quit of whimsies? That's the point."

"Yes, sir. I'll stay as long as you'll have me."

"Good! Now come and send your wire, and then let us see what we can arrange about your lady passenger."

VI.

The service at the Roman Catholic church was held at the unearthly hour of eight-thirty in the morning, and at the English church at nine, because the *Ethiopian* was to sail with the tide at eleven. It was a morning to bring joy to the heart of a stone man. There was just a suggestion of chill in the air, for it was yet early in February, but the sun

rode high, and even the dreary dockside of Monte Moreno seemed touched with beauty in the rain-washed glory of the morning as Jack Armstrong and his bride drove down to their ship in a carriage drawn by six resplendent mules.

The *Ethiopian* lay with steam up, and moored at either end of her were the *Glasgow* and the *Greenock*, Gray Anchor ves-

sels. All three boats were gay with bunting, and the rails were lined in man-o'-war fashion by the enthusiastic crews.

Armstrong turned to help his bride to alight, and as he saw the radiance in her eyes, he caught his breath.

"Girl, girl," he whispered, "you get more wonderful every time I look at you."

"Boy, boy," she mimicked, her halting English and rolling r's making divine music, "I know a sailor who wears rosy spectacles. I hope he'll always wear them."

The syren of the *Ethiopian* bellowed a welcome as they stepped on the gang-plank, at the head of which Mulligan was waiting to receive them, immaculate in the nautical gear of the tropics, every coppery hair in his torpedo beard looking as if it had been individually clipped and polished. He was supported by Heathcote and Bennett, and the officers of the sister ships.

Mulligan put out his hand to help the bride over the awkward break at the head of the gangway, and she took it, blushing happily.

"Mr Mulligan, I know you by Jack's pictures," she said. "And Mr Heathcote I see there, and Mr Bennett."

She stepped lightly over the break. As her foot touched the deck, her face paled, and but for Mulligan's quick arm she would have fallen. Armstrong, following, emitted an exclamation of concern, and

bounded to her side, but before he could stoop over her, a cry almost as of fear sprang to his lips, and he swung on his heel like an animal at bay.

After years of barrenness and gloom, these two had once more reached the radiant height where the sun bathed all their world in its genial light, and the sky held no speck . . .

Armstrong pulled himself together, and presented the officers, one after another, to his wife, who smiled with pitiful courage through hardly restrained tears.

The *Ethiopian's* cook had worried himself to a shadow, and Mulligan had mortgaged six months' pay to make the wedding breakfast a success. Their part had been well done, but a blight had fallen on the company, and their speech-making and merriment was a ghastly caricature, like those prison dinners of the French Revolution, when the aristocrats, who had been warned for the morning guillotine, dined their friends till sunrise.

Armstrong thanked them in a speech, the words of which were happy enough, but his voice was harsh and toneless, and his smile fixed as though cast in bronze. The guests went swiftly, their forced laughter and good wishes having for the bridal pair an awful effect of grimacing and mockery.

"Stand by," Armstrong instructed Mulligan while the last visitor was heaving a sigh of relief on the wharf. "I'll take

my wife below, and be on the bridge in a few minutes."

He led the girl down to their quarters, two state-rooms opening out into a main cabin, the whole cosily furnished under the affectionate eye of Mac-Murdoch.

"I'll be down again directly we're clear of the Pillars," he said, patting his wife's shoulder, and striving to speak lightly. He turned to the door hastily, but before he could reach it her arms were round his neck, and her eyes, molten with terror, caught and held his.

"Jack, Jack! me—have I brought you this?" she cried.

"Brought me what, child?"

"The shadow. Before I came the shadow had left you; you take me, and it has come back to haunt us both."

Armstrong pressed the terror-stricken face against his breast, and stroked the shining raven hair with tender clumsy fingers, while he forced his dry tongue to words of comfort and cheer.

"Mustn't cry till you're burned, little lady. This is Monte Moreno, you know, Carlo Pacheco's own stamping ground, and the vindictive little devil is entitled to his last fling before he loses us for ever. It's just our imagination and my guilty conscience. Wait till we get beyond the Pillars; good keen sea-breeze will settle that ghost, girl. Come—one kiss; you mustn't cry on our wedding-day."

She lifted her face, and Armstrong saw, and the sight seared his soul, that the hard lines

which had faded from her face since the night of their meeting were creeping back already. And far back in her great dark eyes fear lurked. He kissed her, gripping her in his strong arms as if he would crush her to death, and then he fled on deck. And Carlo Pacheco ran at his heels like a hell-hound waiting the word to spring.

"Have you looked at the glass, sir?" Mulligan asked, as the pilot pushed off, and the *Ethiopian* sprang into her stride for the open sea.

"No, and I haven't even looked at the sky, Mulligan. I'm a damn poor skipper."

"Mercury's going down as if somebody had trodden on it, and look at that cloud, sir; I hope Mrs Armstrong is a good sailor."

Low on the northern horizon a thin line of black cloud had appeared, spreading itself with incredible rapidity along the sea-rim, and the noonday sun glared with a reddish light through a thin haze which fled across the sky, a swift and silent herald of the cataclysm following hard on its heels. Gulls, screaming fearfully, were making their way shoreward at speed, and from far off a low mutter of thunder was borne across the sea.

"We might run in, sir."

"No time," Armstrong snapped. "You've got a quarter of an hour. Snug down all you can, and put below everybody not needed on deck. You'll find mighty little loose about the decks by the time

this has finished with us. Jump to it."

The cabin steward rushed up to the bridge, and Armstrong paused on his way to the engine-room telephone.

"There'll be no supper to-night, steward. Make Mrs Armstrong as comfortable as you can, and tell her from me not to worry."

"Mrs Armstrong, sir, 'as fainted."

The skipper took a step or two in the direction of the ladder, then paused. The thunder growled nearer and nearer, like the guns of an advancing army. The black racing clouds had already swallowed the sun, and jagged forks of lightning flashed luridly in the threatening noonday twilight.

"You've got a wife, steward," he said. "Look after mine as if she were your own."

He turned back to the telephone, to warn Heathcote of the approaching storm. Bennett returned, bringing the skipper's oilskins, and struggling into his own as he came. Mulligan followed a moment later, still in his wedding garb.

"The worst of new clothes is that you're bound to fall down a sewer," the Irishman chuckled. "Lucky we didn't get this with the *Imperator*, sir."

"Perhaps," Armstrong answered shortly. "Hold on; here she comes."

A long line of foam leaped over the rim of darkling waters. The thunder crashed once, and lightning flashed across the

sky as though the firmament had split in twain. A wild flurry of hissing spray lashed at them savagely, and then the storm was upon them. The *Ethiopian* went up and over, and lay quivering on her beam ends, as if held there by the solid force of the wind.

"She'll never right herself," Mulligan yelled in the skipper's ear.

The ship fought desperately for her life. Twice she half-righted, and was flung back again. Her rails were deep under water, and to the men on the bridge it seemed that they stood alone, with only the bridge afloat on that seething cauldron. The ship tried again, fighting as if she knew it was her final chance, hung for a moment indecisively, and then swung her bows squarely at the rushing seas. She was steering at last.

"Can't last long," Mulligan cried.

It lasted long enough. The sun was setting when the last clouds drove by. Presently the stars shone out, and a peaceful heaven looked down dispassionately on a raging sea.

The seas were still breaking over the *Ethiopian's* decks when the steward, half drowned, dragged himself up the ladder and staggered on to the bridge. His drenched clothes clung to his meagre body; his moustache, usually waxed into an impudent curl, hung like a bootlace about his trembling lips; his oiled hair was plastered on

his forehead, and hung ridiculously over one eye.

"You've had a nice journey," Armstrong shouted. "How's Mrs Armstrong?"

The unfortunate steward had spent the last six miserable hours besieged in the cabin by the raging seas thundering at the hatch, trying to figure out some formula that would ease the shock of his news to the skipper. He had worked himself along the deck, buried one moment in green water, the

next running for a further safe holding, repeating over and over the announcement he had planned. But the fruit of his anxious thought was gone, and he stood dumb before the captain, the prominent Adam's-apple working frantically on his scrawny throat.

"Speak up, you fool," Armstrong snapped, a sudden wave of anxiety sweeping over him.

"Beg pardon, sir, the missis is dead, sir."

VII.

There is more grey than copper in Mulligan's trim beard in these days. He has an air of command and a suavity caught from much dealing with the great of the earth. It's difficult to believe he was ever drunk.

We leaned over the star-board rail of the boat-deck of a racing liner, and watched the coast of Ireland fading in the haze, and Mulligan talked.

"Yes," he said, "if ever a man stood with his back to a wall, and all the fiends from hell in front of him, that man was Jack Armstrong. I don't think he knew it was the steward he laid hands on. A noise came into his throat like the cry of a beast in pain, and he grabbed the unfortunate flunkey round the middle and swung him above his head, shaking him till his teeth rattled, and it seemed as if his eyes must drop out any second.

"Say it again," he shouted.

"Stop him, Mr Mulligan, sir," the steward wailed. "He'll throw me overboard, sir, if he don't tear me to pieces first."

"I tugged Armstrong by the sleeve. 'Easy, sir,' I said. 'He's probably just lost his nerve. Mrs Armstrong will have fainted again. Best go and see.'"

"The wild light went out of his eyes, and he set the steward down gently as if he were handling a little kid.

"I'm sorry, Jackson," he said in a dead flat voice. "How did it happen?"

"The steward swallowed hard.

"I can't make it out at all, sir. She wasn't ill or anything. Just kept wandering round and round the cabin. Seemed to be talking to herself. I told her there was a blow comin' on, sir, and suggested she should lie down.

"Oh yes, there's a blow coming, Mr Jackson," she says, looking at me funny-like. "Where's the captain, Mr Jackson?" I said you was on the bridge, sir, and that you wouldn't be able to come down for a bit, and that you said she was to lie down. You didn't say she was to lie down, sir, but I thought as how it would come better from you."

"She went to her berth, sir, and then the squall struck us, and I made sure it was all up. I worked my way across to Mrs Armstrong's cabin and asked if she was all right. She didn't answer, sir, so I pushed open the door. She was sort of propped up in her bunk, lookin' pretty green and startled, as you might say. That wasn't surprising seeing she was new to the sea, and with the angle of the ship you couldn't tell the ceiling from the floor. I told her not to be frightened, sir, but she just looked through me and went on talkin' away—half-English, half-Spanish."

"The steward paused and licked his lips. He was come to the crisis in his story, and he didn't want to be man-handled again.

"Well—go on.' You would have thought Armstrong was listening to a report of provision shortage in the galley from the tone. But his eyes—Lord! I'll never forget the look in his eyes. The seas were still breaking pretty heavily, and we were all holding on tight to something, except Armstrong,

who stood solidly as though he were riveted to the deck.

"I was scared, sir,' Jackson went on. 'It wasn't natural for a woman to sit up in her bunk with the boat on its beam-ends, talkin' to the wide world about her husband. I made bold, sir, to shake her, but it wasn't no use. And then, just as the old hooker made her last struggle, and toppled down to an even keel, Mrs Armstrong shot up and reached out her arms. She just screamed twice "Jack! Jack!" and there was nothing to do, sir. She was dead.'"

Mulligan paused to relight his cigar.

"You know, it must have been a pretty awful scene in that cabin," he resumed presently. "The seas pounding like fury, one wall doing temporary duty as a ceiling, the poor girl raving mad, and the steward half wild with funk. And there was a toss of a gallon or so of water to say whether we should sink or swim. Pretty ghastly, I tell you.

"Thank you, steward, you may go,' Armstrong said, and then he turned to me with orders about getting the ship on her course again, attending to any damage, and so forth. His voice was matter-of-fact, and his face set hard as iron, but raw red pain glimmered in the darkness at the back of his eyes, and I could have howled like a kid. And, d'you know, I didn't say a word beyond acknowledging his orders, and he left the bridge.

"There wasn't much damage done really, considering the force of the storm, and we were soon racing along through a moderate chop. I left Armstrong alone, and for the rest of the night, and all next day, he gave no sign. You know how it is aboard ship with a dead body below deck. Every man looked as if he were attending his own funeral, and, beyond what was necessary in the way of duty, there couldn't have been a dozen words spoken that day. I walked up and down the bridge, and I could just feel Armstrong's hoodoo brooding over the boat, as if it were some great dirty bird, keeping pace and hovering always between us and the sun. It was beastly.

"Towards evening I went down to that cabin which had been a bridal chamber forty-eight hours before, and now was a morgue. There was no answer to my knock, and I went in. Armstrong sat beside his wife's berth. She was lying as if turned towards him in sleep, and his hand covered one of hers. He himself might have been dead in his chair, for his eyes stared without seeing anything, and his face was pale and rigid. And, man, if you could sense a shadow on the bridge, you could feel a personal devil brooding in the cabin.

"I felt it was almost sacrilege to speak, but that sort of thing wasn't good for Armstrong. 'Sorry to intrude, sir, but I'm afraid I must,' I said,

and I went on to report the damages, and the steps taken for repair. He shuddered when I started to speak. Light came into his eyes slowly, and at last he looked squarely up at me. My eyes weren't dry, I think, and I know my voice was struggling with the lump in my throat, but Armstrong was as frozen as when he dismissed the steward on the bridge. He stood up and drew the coverlet over his wife's body, and then, 'Start again, will you, Mulligan?' he said. 'I didn't catch the first half.' I went through it again. 'Good,' he said. 'I shall be on the bridge in a minute or two. And, Mulligan . . . send down the necessary things for . . .'

"Man, it was awful. He couldn't get words out, and, just for a minute, I thought he was going to break down and save his reason, but no. 'Sailcloth, needle, and twine, the big Jack, and bars . . . plenty of bars, Mulligan.' 'Shall I send the carpenter down, sir?' I asked. 'Send nobody,' he answered. 'Let them leave the things in the outside cabin, and I'll attend to it myself.'"

An officer came up to make a report, and Mulligan, having dismissed him, stood staring out across the sea for a while, and when he resumed, there was a tenderness in his tone which gave me a new view of the wild Irishman's character.

"He gave orders for the funeral to take place at sunrise, asking me to read the burial service. Before he went

below, he shook hands with Bennett, and then with me. He gripped hard, and mumbled something about my having been 'damned decent.' That 'damned decent' was big praise for me, and I've spent the rest of my life trying to earn it. I was worried about him, and twice that night I went along and took a peep down the skylight into the cabin. The first time he was sitting at his table writing. The next time he had gone back to his place at the head of his wife's bunk, and he sat there, still as stone, with an arm flung as if in protection across what rested under the folds of the ensign.

"We hove-to at dawn, and hands were sent down to carry the body up. Armstrong came, freshly shaved and neat as ever, but walking, I thought, with difficulty. The whole crew mustered and ranged round, and Armstrong stood beside the slip, while I choked my way through the service. At last I came to the part, you know . . . where you tip . . .

"As the body, still wrapped in the ensign, slid off, Armstrong climbed to the rail, and, before any one could move, he

jumped straight and true. He struck the water in the midst of the eddies where she had disappeared, and he sank like a stone. Plenty of bars, he had said, and there had been enough for two."

"And that's the end?" I asked, when we had stood in silence for a long time.

"All—except that he had left a letter in my cabin, addressed to MacMurdoch. He apologised to MacMurdoch for any trouble he might have given him in the past, and recommended me, and all the ship's company, to the old man's special favour. He was particularly anxious we shouldn't think he was going like a coward. 'You never know,' he wrote, 'what's on the other side. It may be better or it may be worse, and I can't leave the girl to face it out alone.'"

"And what do you think?"

Mulligan's blue eyes were bright, but he met my inquiring glance squarely.

"I don't know," he said at last, "but if there's any sense of fair-play in heaven, those two are mighty happy somewhere."

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MERCHANT ADVENTURER.

BY A. C. WRATISLAW, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E.

IN an article entitled "Smyrna in the Seventeenth Century" in the July number of 'Maga,' I left the Chevalier d'Arvieux with his chief, Monsieur Bertandié, on board a British ship bound for Alexandria.

It was a large ship freighted by Turkish merchants of Constantinople to carry a number of Christian slaves of both sexes to the slave markets of Cairo. These unfortunates were Poles, Russians, and Circassians captured by Tartars in their marauding expeditions. The girls were watched like dragons by the eunuchs in charge of them, but the Chevalier managed to exchange a few words with some of Polish nationality who could converse in French, and who begged him piteously to buy them, so that they might keep the faith in which they were born. "But," he writes, "though my heart was torn to see Christians led to market like brute beasts, I was not rich enough to afford charity on so extensive a scale."

The discipline maintained on board the English ship was admirable, and the sailors were required to observe the strictest honesty. A young member of the crew stole from a Turk a small pot of honey not worth five sous, and being convicted

of the theft was tied up to the capstan and given a hundred blows with a rope's end on the appropriate part of his body, although the owner of the honey and the passengers in general begged the captain to let him off.

Though a strict disciplinarian, the captain proved himself an admirable host. He provided his passengers with good beer and wine, dried fruit, poultry, and mutton, but the cookery left much to be desired. The meat, whether roast or boiled, was invariably underdone, and as for the English plum-pudding, the Chevalier declares that it was simply detestable. "It is composed of flour or crumbled biscuit, lard, currants, salt, and pepper made into a paste, tied up in a napkin, and boiled in broth. It is then taken out of the napkin, put on a dish, and stale cheese grated over it, imparting an unbearable odour to the whole. Without the cheese it would not be so absolutely bad, and it is certainly very nourishing."

The captain would not allow the Frenchmen to pay a penny for their entertainment, pudding and all. He was the most courteous commander the Chevalier ever met, and deserved a better fate than awaited him, for on the return voyage from Egypt to England the crew

mutinied and murdered him with hatchets. Perhaps their idea of discipline did not agree with his.

The navigation of this master mariner seems to have been hardly on a par with his social qualities, for the ship, aiming at Alexandria, brought up at Damietta. Coasting back towards the west they found three French ships anchored in Aboukir Bay, and ascertained from them that it was inadvisable for Frenchmen to proceed to Alexandria until certain dissensions in the French colony had subsided, as these gave the Turks occasion to worry them continually.

Accordingly the travellers landed at the little village of Fiquieres, saluted as they left the English ship by her ever-courteous captain with the discharge of five guns. Here they hired a house from a peasant, and sat down to await events.

The account given in the *Memoirs* of the great split in the French community in Egypt is a little involved, but the following are the essential facts. A certain Monsieur de Cabre, a Marseilles merchant, had been French Consul in Cairo. When he retired from Egypt to his native town, he installed his nephew, M. Dantoine, in his place; but another Marseillais, M. de Bermond, coveted the job, and obtained it by the simple device of bribing the Pasha of Cairo to deport M. Dantoine. The whole French Colony in Egypt took sides

with one or the other, and threw themselves into the fray with such vigour that before long they had spent all the money they possessed in paying the complacent Pasha to effect further deportations of the prominent men on either side. When private funds became exhausted both parties pledged the credit of the French community in order to obtain the sinews of war; and by dint of borrowing at 30 per cent from local usurers they had by now managed to run the community into debt to the tune of four hundred thousand crowns for principal and interest. All this went into the pocket of the Pasha, who was only too delighted to arrest and pack off any Frenchman, provided that his opponents came down with a sufficient inducement.

Complaints of this suicidal situation reached the French Court, where also M. de Cabre worked for vengeance on his nephew's supplanter; and in the end a new Consul, M. Begne, was appointed, in the hope that by his tact and prudent conduct he would be able to put an end to dissensions, which were ruining French prosperity in Egypt and making Frenchmen a general laughing-stock. Unfortunately the friends of M. Bermond were no less active on his behalf, and obtained a Royal Commission confirming that gentleman in his post. Thus there were now two French Consuls in Egypt, both provided with

Commissions in due form, and bearing approximately the same date, and the civil war instead of being appeased broke out with renewed vigour.

M. Bertandié and the Chevalier d'Arvieux found M. Begne with his suite and M. de Cabre, who accompanied him to gloat over the fall of his enemy, installed in Fiquieres waiting for something to turn up. M. Bertandié was of a peaceable disposition and neutral to the quarrel, and as a prolonged stay in a dirty Egyptian village was satisfactory to no one concerned, he proposed a compromise. M. Begne agreed, and negotiations were opened with M. Piquet, the leader of the de Bermond faction in Alexandria. This gentleman readily consented to treat, and as the pourparlers were expected to last a considerable time, it was arranged that M. Begne should remove his quarters to Alexandria meanwhile, on the distinct understanding that this should be done in an unofficial manner and without prejudice to the disputed question as to which was the rightful claimant.

Sad to relate, M. Begne did not keep his word, but, worked on by the vindictive M. de Cabre and the members of his own staff, who feared that any terms of peace might involve the loss of the jobs they had come so far to obtain, he made his entrance into Alexandria with as much ceremony as circumstances allowed, accepted complacently the congratula-

tions of the foreign Vice-Consuls on his appointment, and allowed himself to be conducted to the Cathedral, where a *Te Deum* was sung in his honour. Next day he still further compromised himself by distributing to numerous subordinate Turkish officials the blackmail exacted from newly-appointed Consuls to the amount of several thousand crowns. "I was disgusted," says the Chevalier, "at the insolence of these rascals, who exacted payment with more arrogance than if it were question of the recovery of a debt and who heaped insults and curses upon us."

MM. Bertandié and Piquet now again brought forward the matter of a peaceable settlement, but without success, as letters arrived from M. Gleize, acting as M. Begne's agent in Cairo, to the effect that he had arranged with the Pasha to recognise M. Begne and deport his rival in return for an honorarium of thirty thousand crowns. M. Begne had therefore better go ahead, call on the chief officials of Alexandria, and make them the usual presents so as to win them over to his side.

No sooner said than done. M. Begne set off, mounted on a fine horse, and clad in red satin. His suite, including the Chevalier, followed him on donkeys, no foreigner but a Consul being permitted to use the nobler quadruped in Egypt. "The populace accompanied us with derisive shouts; short of throwing mud and stones

at us, they could not have shown greater contempt. Coming from Smyrna, where the Franks are free and respected, I found myself in a country where the utmost they can expect is to be treated on the same footing as the Jews." The party called on all the notables of the town, which took a whole day.

Meanwhile M. de Bermond had by no means wasted his time in Cairo. Seeing that all hope of an amicable settlement had vanished into thin air, he made overtures to the Pasha, outbid M. Gleize, and obtained an order for his own recognition as Consul, and that M. Begne should be put on board ship forthwith and sent back to France.

The Agha charged with the execution of the decree burst with his myrmidons into M. Begne's dwelling at Alexandria, seized that luckless representative of France, and hustled him down the stairs, "four at a time," according to the Chevalier, without giving him time even to put on a cloak, though it was a bitterly cold night and raining hard. After having his pockets gone through and his watch and other property removed, he was mounted on an ass and conducted with his suite to Aboukir, and there handed over to the commander of the fort.

The official gave him his choice between having his head cut off instanter or going on board ship. M. Begne showed no hesitation in plumping for

the latter alternative, and with his men was hastily embarked in small boats and conveyed to a French ship, though the weather was so bad that their safe arrival appeared miraculous. There they had to wait until the vessel should finish loading and be ready to sail.

One would have thought that M. de Bermond had at last come out definitely on top, and could now sleep soundly in his bed. If he did, he reckoned without the indefatigable M. Gleize. This trusty agent obtained a secret interview with the Pasha, and, by pointing out that the latter, who had enemies about the court in Constantinople, could ill afford to have the French Government complain, as it was bound to do, of the ignominious treatment inflicted on M. Begne, a man of honour, and provided with the King's commission, he so worked on the great man's fears that he confessed he might have been rushed by M. de Bermond. The offer of a sum exceeding even that received from the latter completed the conversion, and the Pasha gave his word to deport M. de Bermond and recall M. Begne, and added the assurance that if M. Begne's adversaries refused to recognise him the lot should be shipped back to France.

The Pasha was as good as his word. Another Agha was despatched in haste to Aboukir with a fine horse and a splendid coat as a solatium to M. Begne, and to conduct him to Cairo,

where the Pasha received him like a father and promised him his entire protection.

M. de Bermond in his turn was haled off to Aboukir, and, faced with the alternative placed before M. de Begne, made the same eminently prudent choice. But for him there was no recall, no fine horse, no magnificent coat, nor did the Pasha feel called upon to refund the money paid him for the deportation of M. Begne.

The settlement of this affair delayed the travellers more than a fortnight in Alexandria, and they found some difficulty in getting away, for all Frenchmen were detained in the country as security for the debts incurred as stated above by the community. By representing to the authorities that they were merely passing through the country and could not justly be considered as residents or held responsible for residents' debts, and, what was perhaps a still more effective argument, by making a handsome present, they finally succeeded in obtaining passports, and the Chevalier set off to ride to Rosetta with the baggage in advance of his companion.

At Rosetta, which he considered the most beautiful place in Egypt after Cairo, he waited four days for M. Bertandié, and as usual spent the time in seeing everything that was worth seeing. While out shooting, for the shooting was good, he had a narrow escape from the local buffaloes. These quad-

rupeds were perfectly harmless to Turks, Jews, and Arabs, but made a point of attacking any Frank they saw, and would trample him to death if they could catch him. The Chevalier met a herd which at once made for him with extraordinary fury, and he had to run for his life. Fortunately his legs served him well, and when he put a large ditch between himself and his pursuers they stopped short.

A drawback to Rosetta was the audacity of the Arabs from the country round. "They could give points to Spaniards even in their address at thieving, and constantly break into houses in search of plunder. If one shoots them at sight the Turks say nothing. They generally commit their depredations by night, naked, with their bodies covered with oil or grease so as to escape arrest more easily, and when pursued leap into the Nile, preferring to fall into the mouths of the crocodiles rather than into the hands of the Turks, who show them no mercy." Impalement and skinning alive were the punishments reserved for such criminals, and the Chevalier witnessed both forms of execution.

The process of impalement is too horrible to describe in detail. The victim at whose punishment the Chevalier was present actually lived for fifteen hours with a large stake in his inside, and though he must have suffered agonies made no complaint, but in the earlier

stages conversed with his friends, smoked, and even drank coffee. *O dura Araborum ilia.*

The man whom they skinned alive was a famous robber. He had previously received terrible bastinadoings, but failing to mend his ways was sentenced to be impaled. However, he represented to the Cadi that as his father and his grandfather before him had been skinned alive for robbery, it would be an affront for himself and his family if he died by any other death. The Cadi, a polite man, saw the force of this argument, and granted him the favour of ending like his ancestors.

Before leaving prison his arms were extended and bound to a thick stick, and thus he was conducted to the marketplace. He was then laid on his stomach, and four men, taking hold of the ends of the stick and his two legs, stretched the body taut. The executioner then slit the skin across the shoulders and down both sides over the ribs as far as the waist, and afterwards tore it off very adroitly, only having to make use of his razor when occasionally the skin stuck too tight to the flesh. The patient was then turned over on his back, and the process repeated in front. His arms were now untied, and he was allowed to get up. He walked a few steps with the great flaps of skin hanging down behind and before, after which he fell down and expired from loss of blood. He uttered no cry during the

operation, only complaining "moderately" from time to time.

In four days' time M. Bertandié reached Rosetta, and they started at once for Damietta on board a vessel hired for the purpose. They freighted it with provisions, biscuit, wine, brandy, dried fruit, and dried fish, but no meat, for they were pious folk, and the season was Lent. In the stern of the boat a kind of hut roofed with matting was erected as a protection from rain and the dew, which is very injurious to health on the Nile. The travellers and their servants were all armed with guns and pistols as a protection against Arabs and other evil-doers who swarmed on the Nile, and as a warning to such malefactors they discharged all weapons at sunset, as well as every time the guard was changed. When the wind was favourable the vessel made its way under sail; at other times the crew took to the bank and towed in a state of complete nudity, which shocked the delicacy of M. Bertandié.

Thus they travelled for four days, until they reached the apex of the Delta, where the Nile divides into the Rosetta and Damietta branches. They then turned north again, and sailed down to Damietta. The reason for choosing a route round the two longest sides of a triangle was not so much the greater ease of travelling by water as the fact that the land road across the base of the Delta was so infested by Arab

robbers that the Turks themselves dared not use it.

Damietta, with the current helping them, was reached in two days. Their stay here was not a particularly pleasant one, considering that foreigners of all nationalities were most unpopular in the town owing to the constant depredations on that coast of Christian pirates from Malta and Leghorn. They plundered and carried off Moslems and Christians alike, and the natives consequently bore a deep grudge against all Europeans. Our travellers were regarded with dislike, and suspected of being either pirates themselves or at least spies in their interests, and it was in fact only the Chevalier's acquaintance with the Turkish language which saved them from serious disaster.

One day, while bargaining in a shop, he noticed a band of Turks and Greeks hanging round the door and listened to their discussion, as he and his companions were evidently the subject of the conversation. He heard them arrange to attack and plunder the party at dawn next day in revenge for what they themselves had endured at the hands of Europeans, so, forewarned, the party hastily packed up and embarked on board a native sailing-vessel bound for Acre, and pushed off the same night.

Another delay awaited them at the mouth of the river, for the violent north wind which prevailed had heaped up the

sand into a bar, completely blocking the exit. When the wind fell the Nile current gradually removed the obstruction, but it was a fortnight before their ship, with forty others in like case, was able to proceed.

After a day's sail to the northward the weather again became extremely bad, and the heavily-laden ship was in great danger. For three days they were tossed about at the mercy of the waves, and at last the Greek crew threw their hands in, the captain abandoned the helm, declared that all was lost, covered up his head with his cloak, and threw himself on the deck to await the end.

Fortunately the emergency produced a man to cope with it in the person of a French merchant captain, Martin by name, who was on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and had embarked with the rest at Damietta. He now assumed command, and thanks to his more skilful management the ship laboured less.

All this time the passengers were on exceedingly short commons, bread and water in fact; for it was impossible to light a fire and cook such provisions as were available. The enterprising Chevalier, however, managed to get into the hold and fish out a small barrel of spirits, which he shared with his companions and a number of Turkish passengers returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca. The holy men inquired if it was wine, the use of which the prophet forbade,

and finding it was only alcohol, which the prophet omitted to mention, they partook heartily and found themselves much better for the refreshment.

Land was sighted early next day, and the Greeks proposed to run the vessel ashore forthwith at the nearest point, and take the risk of being captured and enslaved by Arabs. Captain Martin, however, wished to coast along until a port could be found, and he was backed up by the Turks, who threatened to throw into the sea any one who ventured to dispute the captain's orders. Eventually that stout mariner brought them safely into Sour (Tyre of the ancients), only forty miles north of Acre, their original destination.

Sour was little more than a mass of ruins, and offered small inducement for a prolonged stay; so after a night's rest the travellers took horse and arrived next evening in Acre. Here they found installed the whole French colony of Saida, Consul and all, who had migrated there nearly a year before in protest against their foul treatment by the Turkish Governor, Hassan Agha.

This functionary had set the eye of covetousness on a fine Arab mare, the property of M. Francois Caulet, one of the richest and most esteemed French merchants of the place, and sent his servant with five hundred piastres to buy her. Caulet, who loved his mare and was in no want of money,

refused to let her go, and sent her to a friend's stable to be out of harm's way. The Governor insisted, but in spite of the advice of the Consul, who foresaw trouble, Caulet showed himself equally obstinate. Hassan Agha's next move was to produce a witness to declare that the animal had been stolen from him, and to send a message to the Consul demanding the payment of five hundred piastres as damages to the owner. He further intimated that if the sum were not forthcoming before the morrow it would grow into a thousand.

The French community thereupon held a meeting, and resolved to support their compatriot to the end. Next day the Consul deputed his Dragoman to assure the Governor that the mare had been honestly bought from her real owner and duly paid for, but that if he would only show a little patience everything possible would be done to overcome the obstinacy of Caulet. In reply, the Governor merely asked the Dragoman if he had brought the five hundred piastres. As he had not, he was informed that unless a thousand were forthcoming by the evening double the amount would be demanded next day.

The riposte of the Frenchmen was to hold another meeting and bravely confirm the resolution passed by the first.

The fine continued to increase by geometrical progression until it amounted to 64,000 piastres, when Hassan Agha

threatened to have the Han where the French lived plundered and themselves impaled as robbers unless it were paid at once. Terrified by this deadly menace, the merchants did not dare to go out of doors, trade was at a standstill, and the Dragoman no longer ventured to visit the Governor. Finally, when a company of soldiers prepared to beat in their doors, the French community came to the conclusion that it was time to climb down. They accordingly met and passed a third resolution to the effect that peace should be made on the best terms possible, and after much haggling they were let off with the payment of 23,000 piastres.

The triumphant Agha continued to bleed and persecute the Frenchmen until his year of office expired and he left Saida. His successor, Ismail Agha, was, the Chevalier assures us, "the best man in the world, the most equitable, the most polite," and one would have thought that they would gladly make up for past disasters by trading quietly under his auspices. But no, they wanted vengeance on Hassan Agha, and they conceived that by seceding from Saida and stopping the trade of the place they would make their protest more emphatic. So off they went to Acre, and from there despatched one of their number, M. de Coudre, with the Dragoman Fuzibée to Constantinople to lay a complaint.

The envoys started from Acre by ship, but suffered so much from sea-sickness that they soon landed, and continued the journey on shore.

Hassan Agha, who really seems to have been an official of exceptional enterprise, duly learned through his spies of the movements of the delegates, and took measures to have them murdered before they had gone very far. Nothing daunted, the French community despatched a fresh deputation, accompanied by the widow and family of poor Fuzibée, which reached Constantinople safely by sea. They were received by the Grand Vizier, and succeeded in establishing the truth of their complaint against Hassan Agha. He was thrown into prison (until he bribed his way out), and his property was confiscated for the benefit of the French community; but as, in anticipation of some such result, he had securely hidden the greater part of his fortune, what the Frenchmen finally received did not nearly cover their expenditure. In less than two years they had incurred debts to the amount of 84,000 piastres, and all, as the Chevalier bitterly observes, through the obstinacy of a single individual who was unwilling to part with a mare.

The town of Acre was little more than a mass of magnificent ruins, which the Chevalier opined must conceal much that was curious and interesting had the Turks allowed excava-

tions to be made. They declined, however, to do so, believing that when the Knights of St John evacuated the town and retreated to Malta they first buried all their treasure, and that if Christians were allowed to grope about in the ruins they would, through their superior power of magic, be able to locate and appropriate it. As a residence the place left much to be desired, being very unhealthy in summer and surrounded by an arid district which produced little in the way of provisions. Anything in the shape of luxuries had to be imported from Saida. The Chevalier, fortunately for himself, remained there only three months, during which little of interest happened, the monotony of a place where there was neither work nor amusement being varied only by two incidents.

The first occurred only a few days after his arrival, and was due to the despair of the polite and equitable Ismail Agha. Innocent as he was, he found that in the absence of the French and the consequent total cessation of trade at Saida the emoluments of his post, bought as the custom was for a considerable sum, had so fallen off that bankruptcy stared him in the face. Friendly letters imploring them to return, and assuring them of the kindest treatment, proved of no avail, and he accordingly conceived the idea of kidnapping the Consul, being convinced that if he had possession

of the Queen Bee the swarm would be sure to follow. With this object he suborned a Druse Chief, the Emir Melhem, to send a large band of Arabs to execute the job. The Frenchmen, however, got wind of this intention, and shut themselves up in their Han with arms and provisions, prepared if necessary to stand a siege. The Arabs, finding their quarry prepared and themselves not relishing the risk of an open fight, abandoned the attempt and withdrew to Saida, to recoup themselves for their trouble by plundering the French settlement there; but this Ismail Agha, equitable to the last, would not allow.

One Sunday, while taking the air on the roof of their dwelling, the Chevalier and his friends perceived a Maltese corsair at anchor between Acre and Haiffa to intercept shipping coming from Egypt to the Syrian coast. Several vessels were seen to pass, but these had the wind of her, and managed to escape. In the afternoon a French-owned barque engaged in the coasting trade hove in sight coming from Jaffa, and was at once pounced upon. The captain and crew put off for shore to avoid capture, and landed near Mt. Carmel, where the Arabs stripped them naked, but with true Oriental hospitality spared their lives. The passengers, who were exclusively pilgrims returning from Jerusalem, remained on board, convinced that they would be safe from

molestation at the hands of good Catholics like the Maltese, but they were soon undeceived. Even the priests among them were robbed of all their possessions, including relics from the Holy Land, while the rest of the pilgrims were deprived even of their clothes.

The corsair was very short of provisions, and in no position to be encumbered with prisoners, so the poor pilgrims, naked all excepting the priests, were put into a boat and rowed to Haiffa; but the Turkish authorities refused to allow them to be landed unless the French vessel was released, and to this the Maltese captain was eventually compelled by his necessities to agree.

At night the Governor of Acre commandeered two French ships lying in the port, filled them with soldiers, and sallied forth to capture the corsair, but he bungled the job and she got away. It is strange that the Chevalier's sympathies should have been entirely with the Maltese in this affair, notwithstanding their impiety in robbing pilgrims, but he was delighted when they were saved from the general impalement which would have certainly followed their capture.

In July malaria raged in Acre. The Chevalier attributed it to the miasma arising from the stagnant water collected in the old reservoirs left by the Knights of St John, and declared that the only safeguard was to lie snugly in bed until nine in the morning, by

which time the sun had caused these vapours to disperse; and that after that hour one could go out safely to business, taking first some food and smoking two or three pipes of tobacco. If he followed his own prescription it was not very efficacious, for he himself suffered from ten days continuous fever, and it was months before he was completely rid of it. Several of his compatriots succumbed, and he attributed his own survival to his refusal to allow the doctors to meddle with him, and to his vigorous constitution.

This last straw determined the Frenchmen to return to Saida. Ismail Agha's term of office was now over, his successor was known to be friendly to the French, and they had got as much satisfaction out of Hassan Agha as they were ever likely to get; so they put their sick and their goods on board ship and sailed for their old homes, where the inhabitants received them with lively demonstrations of joy.

Saida, now but a petty provincial town, was at this time the principal place on the Syrian coast, and the great commercial depot of the country. All the French merchants had their headquarters there, while maintaining agents in other ports—Tripoli, Beyrut, Acre, and Rama—to buy up and forward to them the produce of those districts. Only a few resided at Damascus, for experience had proved the inconvenience and danger of

the long journey to that place, particularly to traders carrying large sums of money, through a country infested by robber Druses and Arabs. The French had the commerce of Saida all to themselves. There were no other European residents to compete with them, and it was only occasionally that an English or Dutch ship would call to discharge goods which it had been unable to dispose of at other ports in the Levant.

The French community lived together in a vast Han built of stone, which served its members both for dwelling and warehouses. It housed besides an establishment of Franciscan monks and another of Jesuits, in addition to the Consulate, and some estimate of its size may be formed from the dimensions of the inner court, which measured sixty paces by a hundred and twenty. A common restaurant for the convenience of the inmates was attached, where they got excellent food at a reasonable price. The Franciscans celebrated mass regularly in their chapel, but the community had to pay five hundred crowns a year to the Turks for the privilege.

Two medical men completed the equipment of this little republic, and the Chevalier, who had no use whatever for Jews, Greeks, or doctors, cannot refrain from a dig at them. "I will say nothing of their skill for fear of saying too much or too little. If the men they have killed could speak,

they would give us more certain information; but here, as everywhere else, the earth covers their faults. If we are to judge of the attainments of a doctor by the cemeteries he has filled, one can safely aver that these two were first-class."

The Chevalier himself did not live in the French Han, preferring to have apartments in another, smaller but more convenient and attractive, which was frequented by native merchants. It was besides quieter than the larger establishment, and he could entertain his friends and pursue his studies of languages with less fear of interruption. He declares that he was as well lodged as he could possibly wish. He lived cheaply and well, as the country round was fertile, and produced grain and excellent fruits in abundance, partridges and other birds swarmed in the neighbourhood, and most of the Frenchmen, including himself, went out shooting regularly. Those who were not sportsmen kept a man specially to provide game for their tables.

The population of Saida consisted almost entirely of Moslems. There were a handful of Greeks, a small community of Maronites (native Catholics), and a rather larger one of Jews. The last-named had a miserable time. "The Jews have a separate quarter, a kind of blind alley, in which they are locked at night. Their houses are as filthy as their persons, which is why hardly

any one visits them. They are said with truth to be the poorest and worst treated of all who inhabit the Ottoman Empire, and at the same time the most rascally and wicked. Their industry alone enables them to live. They act as brokers to the merchants, and buy up the proceeds of Arab robberies, but in spite of all their hard work and their rascalities they barely manage to pay their tribute to the Government. The Turks maltreat them cruelly, and reproach them without cease for having slain the Messiah, assuring them that the only reason for not exterminating them completely is that they may suffer longer in this world and the next." So great was the Turks' dislike and contempt for the Jews, that if one desired to turn Moslem he was not allowed to do so until he had passed through the intermediate stage of Christianity, and proved his good faith therein by eating pork and drinking wine.

The staple export from Syria was raw silk, then, as now, cultivated on the slopes of the Lebanon. There were then no silk manufactures—at least none of any importance—in England, which possibly explains the abstention of our countrymen from the Syrian trade. Next in importance came cotton, grown in the plains and spun into yarn by women. Minor articles of export were a few cotton and silk stuffs, drugs, gums, senna, and raisins.

The customs duty levied at Saida on behalf of the Turkish Government was 5 per cent on the value of all goods. Strangely enough, the value was always underestimated, and in this one respect the merchant scored. The Governor collected on his own account further dues on goods bought and sold, and charged a percentage on all bargains concluded. He also took toll of the 1 per cent commission allowed to brokers. As money was very scarce in the country, he was compelled to accept silk in payment of a considerable proportion of the amount due for taxes. He took this from the peasants at much below, and sold it to the French merchants for much above, its market value. He also from time to time "borrowed" money from the Frenchmen, which he usually omitted to repay. In such cases the loss incurred by an individual was divided amongst the whole community. When an extraordinarily honest Governor did settle his debt, it was in silk, and at a price fixed by himself and always to his own advantage. There was no escape from such exactions, as it had been proved by bitter experience that a complaint to the Porte entailed an expenditure greater than the original loss.

The question naturally arises how it came that the King of France allowed his subjects to be victimised in this outrageous way. The answer is

that Turkey, though already on the downward grade, was in the middle of the seventeenth century still the greatest military state in Europe, and no Christian Power was in a position to exercise effective pressure on her. If foreign merchants chose to reside in the Ottoman Empire they had to submit to Ottoman methods, with no more protection than could be afforded by platonic remonstrances of Ambassadors at Constantinople. The time to bully and coerce the Turk had not yet come.

The French Consul was paid entirely by fees. Nominally he was entitled to 2 per cent on the value of all merchandise shipped on French vessels, but out of this he had to provide the salaries of dragomans and clerks, besides other expenses, and barely half was left for himself. Thus, in bad times such as the Governorship of Hussein Agha, it was not easy for him to make ends meet, and several Consuls resigned on this account. He was continually called on to make "presents" to Turkish officials, and this cost him on the average fifteen hundred crowns a year, as much as his living expenses. The establishment he kept up was by no means small. A chancellor, two secretaries, several dragomans, a valet, a cook with two assistants, a purveyor, two footmen, two grooms, a man to fetch water, two horses and a donkey, his usual household, must have eaten a big hole in the

fees even in a country where living was cheap and wages were low.

A year after the Chevalier's arrival in Saida one of his Bertandié cousins was appointed Consul, and a full description is given in the Memoirs of his first official call on the Governor. The post had recently been raised to the rank of a Pashalik, and the occupant maintained greater state than the mere Aghas, his predecessors.

An essential part of the ceremony was the preliminary despatch of gifts, not only to the Governor, but to the Cadi and other persons of consideration in the town as well. These consisted of cloth, satins, candles, sugar, coffee, and sweetmeats. A little later in the day, after the new Consul had attended Mass in the Franciscan chapel, the whole of the French colony assembled in the Consulate, and a procession was formed. First came two janissaries, then two dragomans, followed by all the Consul's servants. Next the Consul himself, clad in a scarlet coat laced with gold, and over it a cloak trimmed with sable. He also wore scarlet silk stockings. (No foreigner but a Consul was allowed by the Turks to wear red clothes.) His hat was of beaver with a tassel of gold, his linen and lace were of the finest quality, and he wore galoshes over his shoes so that no dust or dirt might attach to them when the time came to

tread on the Governor's carpets. After him marched all his merchants two and two, and their servants brought up the rear.

It was only a few steps from the Consulate to the Serail where the Governor lived, which accounts for his going on foot and not on horseback. The Master of the Ceremonies received him at the door, the guards saluted, and he was first led to the apartment of the Governor's Kihaya, or lieutenant, where compliments were exchanged and coffee drunk before the Master of the Ceremonies conducted the party to the reception hall of the Governor himself.

A dais occupied the far end of the room, and here the great man was sitting cross-legged on a divan. He rose as the Consul entered, and awaited him standing. When the Consul reached the dais, a servant removed his galoshes and two officers took him respectfully by the arms and hoisted him up. The Governor graciously offered his hand, and then resumed his seat on the divan, while the visitor sat opposite him on a stool covered with red cloth. The French merchants remained standing throughout the interview, as did the principal officers of the Governor.

Fifty handsome youths, the Governor's pages, were ranged along the walls in respectful attitudes, and observed a profound silence. They were mag-

nificently clothed in satin and cloth, and carried in rich belts long hanjars or knives with gilded hilts.

Complimentary speeches were exchanged through the Chief Dragoman, both parties making protestations of extreme friendship and desire to work together for the benefit of trade and the maintenance of the amity which should unite their respective nations.

At a sign from the Pasha two pages presented him and his visitor with richly-embroidered handkerchiefs, which were laid on their knees, while two others offered cups of coffee. Similar refreshments were handed to the merchants and officers, but they were not provided with handkerchiefs, presumably because, being on their feet, they had no laps to spread them on.

When the coffee was consumed and the handkerchiefs removed, fresh handkerchiefs and goblets of scented lemon sherbet were presented. Finally, the Governor gave the signal for perfumes to be brought. This meant the termination of the audience, and is a ceremony which has long been obsolete in Turkey. Pages presented to the Governor and his guest decanters filled with rose and orange water, which they poured on their hands and sprinkled on their faces and beards, while others fumigated them with aloe-wood burning in silver-gilt censers. "Other pages did the same office for the merchants and

officers with admirable order, respect, and diligence."

The Consul, acting on this well-understood hint, now got up to go. He shook hands with his host, and they separated with fresh compliments and protestations of friendship. A caftan of white damask was thrown over his shoulders as a parting present, the same officers who had helped him on to the dais assisted him down, his galoshes were restored to him, and after a final bow to the Governor the cortège returned home in the same order, except that it was preceded by the Chaoushes of the Governor, who had to be heavily tipped for the honour of their escort.

The Chevalier's residence in Saida lasted four years. He paid visits to all the principal towns, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, stayed some time with the monks of Mt. Carmel and in other ecclesiastical establishments, and recorded in his Memoirs all that he saw and heard. The book is a regular Baedeker for contemporary Palestine and Syria, and affords a mine of information for those interested in Oriental manners and customs. He returned to France in 1663, but only for a short time, for the call of the East sounded ever in his ears, and his whole active life was destined to be spent in Moslem countries.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL C. E. VICKERY, C.M.G., D.S.O.

I. IN NIGERIA.

THE doctor held forth in the Mess at great length on the stupidity of any one living in West Africa at a bush station without carrying on his person some poison, to end quickly his life if the necessity arose. He showed us his signet ring, in which was concealed some deadly poison. We were more amused than impressed, for Owerri, although a bush station and forty odd miles from the nearest deep-water creek, which ran into the Bonny river, was not considered a bad station. The country was virgin forest, and the climate like a Kew conservatory in summer. It was densely populated by independent tribes inhabiting groups of villages, and intersected by scores of running streams which teemed with fish, mostly a species of perch.

Banana trees flourished at every village, and cultivations of yam fields were situated at some little distance from the huts.

The road from Owerri down country to its port on the creek was cut straight and broad, and passed through friendly or chastened tribes, but elsewhere in the district there were many villages which were not under Government control. The inhabitants, as a whole, were a very debased

people of low mentality and poor physique. Human sacrifices and other pagan rites were practised, and the progress of civilisation was slow. The bad people were known, however, and the Government roads did not as yet go by their villages, for the first visible sign of the subjugation of a village, or its acceptance of the Government, was a broad highway connecting it to its neighbours.

No one was alarmed, therefore, at the doctor's warning, for no one had any intention of calling on a hostile village without a company of soldiers.

A few weeks passed and the doctor went on leave. He decided to send his kit on in advance and bicycle straight through to the creek, where he would catch a steamer. The road was broad and good, many people had done it before, and he cycled off in the afternoon amidst cheery farewells from those who were left behind to grill a few months longer till their turn for leave came.

He was never seen again.

A torn diary and a few prisoners supplied the rest of the story many weeks later.

Apparently the unfortunate officer had got off the broad highway and cycled on down bush paths, thinking that he

would pick up the road again. He ended up in a hostile village, when his last entry in the diary recorded that he had lost his road, and that the natives were closing on him in a suspicious way. He had sat down on a log outside a hut, and was very weary and frightened.

The prisoners told the rest,—how he was tortured, and finally beaten to death. His body was recovered weeks later and buried at a Government station.

“Doctor, where was that ring? After all these years even now we cannot bear to think of you.”

The column was split up into three parties; the gunner was with the H.Q. party. We had been operating north-west of Afikpo, which is on the Cross river, with a small force of all arms in a part of South Nigeria at that time not opened up or explored. The dense forest of the delta had been exchanged for rolling uplands of park-like country watered by many creeks. After weeks of marching in the bush, we felt like those of old must have felt when they viewed the Promised Land.

Herds of water-buck roamed the plain, and smaller buck, as yet easy to stalk; while, to crown all, in some villages there were even horses. These villages were often situated in patches of forest surrounded by the open country.

The various sub-columns were engaged in touring the country and interviewing the various headmen. The H.Q. column

decided to move its camp some twenty miles, seizing the opportunity to call on G. and his little sub-column *en route*.

We moved off early, and arrived at G.'s camp about midday. He gave us a good lunch, and we worked out for the hundredth time exactly how many more days there were before we were due for leave. G. also indulged himself in dreams of the horse that he was going to buy on his arrival home, a horse before whom all others should bow on that narrow path by a pine-clad hill in Surrey.

In the afternoon we set off for our new camp, expecting to get in by 6 P.M. The gunner, who was compiling the column map, discovered that by making a small detour to the left, or west, that he could sketch in a second ford over a creek which the column had to cross.

The C.O. was rather dubious, but as he was assured that the gunner would not be more than half a mile away on his left flank at any time, he consented.

The column then struck off northwards across the creek, while the gunner with his Hausa orderly went off westwards up the right bank to look for the second ford.

The bank of the creek was shady, a compass-bearing had been taken to some point far ahead, and there was nothing to disturb the gunner's thoughts as he walked. Half an hour must have passed before he began to wonder where the ford was. Another quarter of

a mile and he stopped to deliberate, for by this time he realised the column must be some considerable distance away. There were only two alternatives: either to return, cross the creek by the same ford as the column, and then follow their tracks; or else to go on and risk finding the second ford, which had been credibly reported as quite near the former.

The gunner decided to go on, as he was anxious to fill in his map. The creek began to turn south-west, thus increasing his distance from the column, and it was at least another mile before the ford was reached. It was a good ford, three feet deep, with a hard bottom. The gunner stopped for a few minutes to enter up his field-book traverse and survey the country.

Across the creek the road led through a big patch of forest, but beyond that it appeared all open country.

Replacing the notebook in the pocket of his shirt, the gunner waded into the stream, followed by his orderly. They climbed the slope rising from the creek, and entered the patch of forest.

The path was broad but winding. After traversing a quarter of a mile they arrived at a large open space surrounded by giant trees, and enclosed by a wattle fence. It was the ordinary market-place peculiar to most West African villages.

The gunner paused a second,

for if there were a market-place there must be a village, and he was alone with an orderly and one rifle. He began to realise for the second time that he had been more than somewhat silly.

To leave the road and make a circuit of the fence might result in losing their way in the forest or running into the inhabitants of the village, of whose attitude he was as ignorant as of their name.

The market-place looked deserted, and there was no sign of movement; nothing except the screech of a parrot to break the deathly stillness of the forest.

They stood five paces from a wicker gate which opened into the enclosure. The gunner looked at his orderly, and, as if moved by some common impulse or actuated by some mutual telepathy, they moved forward, opened the gate, and passed through. A few paces further, and, as if by magic, from every bush and tree a native issued forth, crouching, painted for war, armed with staves and knives and knobkerries.

It needed not the whisper of his orderly, "Run, master, run; very bad men," to spur the gunner to action. He looked round, and saw to his right one gap in the advancing enemy, and further on in the forest there seemed to be an open patch. At this cursed moment there flashed through his mind the memory of a grass-roofed hut at Owerri, one

man holding forth, and the half-amused and half-impressed looks of his listeners. The lapse of years has not qualified or diminished the memory of those few seconds while the gunner and his orderly stood at bay in the market-place.

They turned towards the gap and made for the fence—the gunner was light of foot in those days—cleared it, and plunged into the forest, followed by that shrieking horde of savages. The open patch—it was a small yam cultivation—loomed close in front; there one could turn at bay and take a goodly number with one as company on the long journey from which there is no return.

The nearest native was only ten paces behind when the gunner fired, without aiming, over his shoulder. This checked the pursuit a second or two, and a few yards on he gained the open yam field. Making for the centre, the quick breath of their pursuers clearly audible, there suddenly rang out clear and sweet a trumpet sounding “Stables.” In a second the gunner and his orderly were alone, panting, sweating, while the old familiar call re-echoed through the forest. Plunging forward towards the sound, cheered and guided by other calls, they emerged in a quarter of an hour into open country, where on a knoll a few score yards away the gunner saw his Yoruba trumpeter, a boy of fourteen, standing alone, blowing calmly as when he blew on the sun-baked square at Calabar.

“Ibrahim, where is the camp?”

“Very far, sir; very long way from here.”

“What are you doing here, then?” said the gunner.

“I no look you, sir, so when the captain not see me, I fall out and blow.”

He was asked if he knew the direction of the camp, and replied that he did, so they turned and walked towards it across the open country.

The boy trumpeter went in front, unconscious that he had saved the gunner's life, and the latter walked behind, profoundly conscious that he had.

The camp was reached in three-quarters of an hour, when the C.O.'s anger was appeased by the gunner's story, and arrangements were made to visit the village next morning.

Shortly after sunrise the column set out to pay its call. It was received with one or two shots; the natives had only a very few Dane guns, and the village was soon occupied.

In a few hours the village architect was assured of much work and practice in house-planning for many months to come, and the column went on its way, leaving messages for the chiefs to come in and make peace with the Government.

The trumpeter was not forgotten, and even the Hausa orderly expressed his intention of giving him a good “dash” when they returned to Calabar, if his wife, who kept the conjugal purse, permitted it.

II. IN KORDOFAN.

Ali Zenayt ruled over the Tegalli hills for a long time before a long-suffering people tired of his oppression and cruelty. He bowed to circumstances, abdicated the throne in favour of his cousin, Geili Adam, and removed to the neighbouring Jebel (mountain) of Tukam, over which he assumed the lordship. The Tegalli hills cover many square miles in South Kordofan, and the semi-Fung, semi-Arab people who inhabited them were well armed, thanks to the massacre of the army of Hicks Pasha. The Caliph Abdullah was too busy at Omdurman during the last few years of the nineteenth century, dealing with the remorseless advance of the infidel, to be able to pay much attention to the state of affairs at Tegalli—three weeks' march from the capital,—hence the change in kingship passed unchallenged. The people of Tukam were pure Nubas, untouched by any civilisation. They had been surrounded by nomad Arabs for many years, yet they remained faithful to their own pagan customs, and refused to wear any clothes, or to accept the Mohammedan religion. Unless they were taken into his family as a slave, the Arab made no attempt to proselytise or to civilise them.

They were a very independent people, but Ali Zenayt soon established over them a great ascendancy, extending to the

neighbouring Jebel of Wadelka, which he allied with Tukam.

In the early days of the occupation of Kordofan, and the establishment of province headquarters at El Obeid, little attempt was made to control the Tegalli district. The Arab had made a fatal error in allowing all the arms to get into the possession of the blacks—that is, of the inhabitants of the mountains of South Kordofan. On the flat plains and in the desert, armed with a spear, mounted on a swift horse, they were scornful of the slave with the gun, but when the latter got into his native hills the situation underwent a radical change, for it was no terrain for cavalry. This short-sighted policy of the Arab obviously did not lighten the task of the Government in settling the country; however, as their influence and control extended, so were new districts created, and an inspector was at last appointed for the Tegalli area.

He duly arrived at Keraia, the principal village, and was met by King Geili Adam, a hopeless drunkard, with his discordant band of musicians recruited from ex-dervishes. Affairs were not very satisfactory, for the King contrived to let the Inspector know almost daily that his small force of police and he were really at his, the King's, mercy.

The Inspector decided to go

on tour, visiting amongst other places the Jebel of Tukam and its overlord, the ex-king Ali Zenayt. This Jebel was one of the highest in the district, and had been selected by the survey officials as a good base for their triangulation, hence an agreement and good relations with its Mek (king) were very necessary.

After a march of three days the hill was reached about 9 A.M. one morning, a table and chair were put up in such shade as a few palm-trees afforded, and the Inspector dealt with the inevitable tinned sausage, while messengers went to summon the monarch.

Eventually he arrived, arrayed in a dazzling yellow "jibba" covered by a red "abaiya." He was escorted by an armed following (Remington rifles, 1860) of naked slaves. After preliminary greetings, the king was asked if he would pay tribute and make roads. As neither had to be done at the actual moment, he consented with seeming alacrity. He was then notified that the Arabs had numerous petitions and complaints against him. It was suggested that he should come with the Inspector to the nearest Arab watering-place about six miles away, where these complaints could be investigated in front of the petitioners and their witnesses.

The king flatly refused to have anything to do with this suggestion. If any one had any complaints to make about him, they could come and com-

plain in his court at the top of Tukam mountain.

Arguments, cajolery, threats were all in vain, till the Inspector, who was very young in those days, finally threatened to take the king with him whether he liked it or not, in order to have the cases heard in accordance with the laws of the Government.

The monarch said three words in Nuba dialect, jumped up, and made for the hill, covered by the presented rifles of his escort. The Inspector had six police and an Egyptian officer with him; the latter whispered to him to sit quiet. There did not seem much else to do unless one was bent on suicide. It was not a very dignified situation for a Government official. However, no one moved till the king had disappeared round a spur of the hill, when his escort followed him. The Inspector waited half an hour, so that it should not look too much like a flight, and then marched off to a neighbouring khor, where were congregated many Arabs with their cattle.

Ali Zenayt was duly reported to headquarters as a bad man, various young gentlemen indulged in a good sneer at the stupid and tactless soldier, and everything went on as before.

Time passed and several unsuccessful efforts were made by the Inspector to get Ali Zenayt to come and see him again. His tribute was sent in by a slave most regularly, and, except for his refusal to have a

personal interview, he really did not give much trouble. It was a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, but the Inspector was loath to make an uninvited call which might provoke open hostilities, and thus make matters worse. Months went by and the district settled down well, but still no progress was made with *l'affaire Ali*, notwithstanding many inquiries from headquarters as to when peace would be patched up with this king. Finally the Governor expressed his intention of visiting the Tegalli district, and requesting the Inspector to meet him at Jebel Daier, about twenty-five miles north of Tukam.

By making a detour the Inspector could march to the rendezvous *via* Tukam. This, in consultation with his sergeant, Ibrahim, he decided to do.

With his party of ten police and personal servants he arrived at the base of Jebel Tukam at sunset one evening, and camped on the road for the night in the usual way. One always slept on the road wherever one happened to be about sunset, so this excited no surprise. Two or three Nubas came down the hill to watch us. No notice was taken of them, and shortly after dinner the camp was asleep, less one watchman. At 2 A.M. the next morning camp was struck, and the whole party moved off on the Daier road. After going half to three-quarters of a mile—it was pitch dark—the Inspector,

his sergeant, and six of the police slid quietly off their horses, which, unnoticeable in the darkness, were being led by saises or other police, and slipped behind some bushes, while the party went on without a check. Waiting for a few minutes in case any Nuba were following (and immediately two appeared, disappearing in the darkness in pursuit of our party), we retraced our steps to the hill. The path was found, and silently and slowly we started to ascend. It was known that the village was half an hour's climb, and that Ali Zenayt's house was somewhere in the centre of the village. We dared not go fast for fear of being heard, and we had to time our march to arrive at the village just as it was beginning to get light.

We toiled on and reached the summit, from where we could see the embers of fires and hear the movements of the animals in the compounds. In a quarter of an hour we could see thirty yards, and the luck of the party held, for a man came noiselessly out of the darkness, bent on his morning duty. He was seized and half strangled before he could cry out. A few threats and Ali Zenayt's house was indicated to us. Taking our prisoner to within twenty yards of the house, we released him and ran for it, tore open the gate of the compound, and burst in the door of the hut. In the semi-darkness we saw an angareb (bed), a slight

form on it, and by its side a grizzled figure without a turban and other portions of his dress, but wearing a yellow jibba (Ali's favourite colour). He sat up, disturbed by our entrance. "Min ya kelab" (Who, oh dogs). "El Hakumah" (the Government), was the reply, and in a second we had him, rushed him out of the hut as he shouted out the alarm, through the compound into the open. Pushing him on to a slab of rock which stood a few feet above the level of the village, Ibrahim, revolver at his head, shouted out, "He dies first," for by this time his people were round us like bees, fingers on the trigger.

"Release him," they cried, "or we will shoot you."

"He dies first," was our reply again.

They wavered, and far below us in the east the sky was flecked with fleecy clouds, changing from dark purple to a faint pink as the dawn approached.

"What do you want with him?"

"He must swear allegiance to the Government, to obey her now and for ever, you and he."

There we stood on the rock, Ali Zenayt in our midst, while his people stormed and threatened, and he said nothing with the revolver ever at his head.

"Time presses, which shall it be, O king?" the Inspector asked him.

"I will swear." We demanded the book, but Ali pro-

tested. "I will swear; there is no need for the Koran."

"Nay, O king, you must swear on the Koran."

Another delay before he consented, and finally the Koran was brought.

"Bring water," said the Inspector, "that he may wash and put clean hands on the written word of the Prophet; on him be prayer and peace."

Water was brought, and finally Ali was ready to swear in accordance with the strict Mohammedan formula, which alone was binding.

The book was held aloft, and Ali with his hand on it swore to honour and obey the Government, to be her friend, and also to meet the Governor on the morrow at Jebel Daier.

He was released, and we jumped from off the rock.

We passed through the sullen ranks of his slaves, down the hill, no man molesting us, and on to our road, where two miles further we found our horses in a khor waiting for us. Cantering over the plain in the blinding glare and heat, the Inspector arrived at his camp about 9.30 A.M. A long morning was spent listening to the interminable petitions of the Arabs about slaves who had run away and would not return, and in the afternoon the party continued their march to Daier.

The village was reached an hour after sunset. We camped there, and the following morning the Inspector rode out a mile and met the Governor. After breakfast, among others,

the affair of Ali Zenayt came under discussion, and the Governor was told that it was settled, and that Ali was coming to see him that morning. The Governor looked sceptical, but asked no questions.

About 11 A.M. the Governor and Inspector went to their huts (there were Government rest-houses at the village) to rest an hour or so before lunch, as there was no sign of Ali. The Inspector did not rest; he sat wondering if he had failed, for he had staked all on the fact that Ali was a strict Mohammedan. An hour passed, when the faithful Ibrahim en-

tered the hut, saluted, "Gai, genab el mufettish" (Coming, your honour the Inspector). In ten minutes the sound of horses' feet, and the Inspector went outside the hut, and found Ali with his bodyguard—unarmed.

They greeted, as if there had never been a yesterday, and he was ushered in to the presence of the Governor, and all was peace, and is so to this day.

Thus was Ali converted and brought into the fold, but the manner in which it was done was wrong, and not in accordance with the regulations.

MURDER DISQUALIFIES.

BY ALAN GRAHAM.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE afternoon had merged into evening on the succeeding day before Neil McNeil drove back into Dorning. He had been far more successful in his endeavours than he had dared to hope, and Francesca and Bubbly were already safely at sea upon a small Norwegian sailing-vessel, which would not touch a port for some days. The question of their safe landing upon the other side had had to be left in the hands of the already well-bribed skipper, but Francesca was still amply provided with funds, and Neil had little fear for her.

He was still using the hired car, as he had not dared to return it to the garage in Edinburgh, where inquiries were certain to be made. He believed that he was taking a big risk in returning to Dorning, but he trusted in the unexpectedness and rapidity of his visit to see him safely through. He was determined to see Jean once more, and when she had had her chance of occupying Dorning House, to release Rufus from captivity.

He drove straight to the manse. The door was opened by Annie, the maid.

"Miss Rintoul?" he asked.

"She's up at the Big Hoose," said Annie, looking at him curiously.

Already! thought Neil, with a certain undefined feeling of distaste at the news. Somehow it did not seem right. There was a callousness in the idea of pursuing fortune so soon after the tragedy—a callousness that he would not have expected from Jean. And yet—why should she have hesitated? So far as she knew, her Uncle Rufus was still at large, and would be sure to hear of Francesca's flight.

Neil returned to his car, and set out for Dorning House. There was a lack of visible excitement about the village that surprised him. He had expected to see police uniforms, groups of gossiping villagers; yet even as he flashed past the Rintoul Arms there was not a sign that anything abnormal had occurred. He found the lodge gates open, and drove straight ahead to the house.

In answer to his double knock he heard heavy footsteps cross the hall, and then the door was flung open, and he found himself face to face with the Reverend William

Murdoch, looking the picture of rude health, and beaming all over his pleasant big face.

"The devil!" exclaimed Neil, starting back in blank amazement.

"No, no, Major McNeil. One of his worst enemies," retorted the minister, with a boyish laugh at the other's bewilderment.

"But—hang it—then I've been tricked—properly!" stammered Neil, feeling an unutterable fool, as the truth came home to him.

"You have," agreed Murdoch cheerfully. "If you can assure me of one thing, we'll have you in and tell you all about it. Is she gone, beyond the fear of her coming back on us?"

"The Signorina? Yes. She's on her way to Norway on a sailing-ship."

"Then come in-by, Major McNeil, and meet our celebrated Grand Guignol company. We don't feel comfortable with the door open. There's still another Richmond in the field, you know, and we have a great respect for him."

Neil smiled to himself at this reference to Rufus, but determined to say nothing for the moment. He followed Murdoch indoors, still more or less dazed by the shock, and found himself in the smoking-room facing Jean Rintoul, Mrs Murdoch, and Rab Wilson. In a cradle in a corner lay Young Bill fast asleep.

"Good evening, Major McNeil," said Jean, blushing

prettily, and looking at the carpet.

Recollections of the previous night's deception embarrassed her. Rab Wilson grinned openly and broadly, and the minister's wife smiled with a conscious air of triumph.

"It was Neil last night when you were imposing on me right and left," said Neil boldly.

"Ah! That was all in the way of business," retorted Jean, meeting his eyes at last, her own full of laughter and mischief.

"Well, I'm a poor fool," said Neil helplessly. "I'm quite out of my depth amongst all you clever people. And I thought I'd done so well!"

"You have—for us," said Murdoch. "Your victim is on the way to Norway, Clarice. Major McNeil, let me introduce to you the sole author and producer and stage-manager of the farce in which you've had a leading, if an unwitting, part—my wife. I only hope the excitement has done her no harm."

The minister crossed to the cradle, and looked anxiously at the sleeping child, to reassure herself.

"I must congratulate you on the success of your production, Mrs Murdoch," said Neil. "I hope you are going to explain it to me, for I still can't understand how you managed to convince so many people of your husband's death."

"Very few did believe it," replied Mrs Murdoch. "Those

who convinced you were confederates."

"But the police!"

"Sandy Johnston was the only one, and he is a very good friend of ours," said Murdoch. "But it's no use beginning in the middle. Light your pipe, McNeil, and we'll tell you all about it."

Seated in a comfortable arm-chair, Neil listened, for the most part in silence, while the conspirators unfolded to him the details of their plot.

"We were compelled to resort to guile when we found we were too weak to succeed by force," explained the minister. "But when my wife first suggested the scheme that has been so successful we all laughed at her."

"The most difficult part of the whole thing was to convince these stupid people that it was possible," said Mrs Murdoch. "They hadn't my experience of stage effects and illusions, of course. The most doubtful thing was whether we could induce the lady to use her dagger. But I thought there was a fairly good chance of that. We had all seen her attempt to attack her uncle with it, and we knew how she had gone for my unfortunate husband later. I was so afraid that I should get blamed for those scratches on his face."

"I didn't see the attack," said Neil, "and I can't understand how it was made so realistic that the Signorina and Bubbly and the rest never had a doubt."

"That was fairly easy. We didn't use blood, because we found it wouldn't keep, and, of course, my husband and Rab had to wait hours for the proper moment. We had the stuff made up at a theatrical shop in Edinburgh, where we also got the chain shirt."

"I wasn't taking any chances with that dagger," explained the minister. "I had some experience with the lady before, and I knew she'd put some force into the blow. By the way, I chose the rôle of corpse because, being in the ministry, I thought it would hardly be the thing for me to do as much lying as was necessary to carry the thing through."

"You acted the main lie of the whole performance," said Jean wickedly. "You can't get away from that."

"Man, Neil, you should ha' seen the murder," said Rab enthusiastically. "It was grand. The bluid fair spootit oot o' him. He had it in a pig's bladder, ablow his weskit."

"There was a capsule in my mouth with more of the same stuff."

"An' the bluid dribbled frae his lips fine. Then, comin' hame i' the caur, I rubbit his face wi' some poother Mistress Murdoch had gied me, sae that when we cam' tae cairry him inbye, he looked like daith itsel'."

"Though I knew what to expect," Mrs Murdoch took up the tale, "I had no need to act. It was so realistic that

I almost fainted in reality. I had whitened my face in advance, and arranged things so that Francesca's representative should not see me until I had seen the body."

"But the doctor?" asked Neil.

"Dr Boag is a very good friend of mine," said Murdoch with a meaning smile. "It was he who decided to send the one-eyed man on a wild-goose chase, and arranged with his friend in Edinburgh to keep him through the night on one pretext or another. He was afraid that otherwise he'd hang about the manse for news and make things more difficult."

"Mr Televant came back this morning," said Jean. "We had to tell him the whole story. He was furious. He has gone off to Edinburgh to hand back the car to the owners."

"How would you have acted if I had not decided to help the Signorina?" asked Neil. "I should have thought it would have been safer to have died at once, and let Televant go back with the news."

"No, we decided to use you, and to wait for night," said Murdoch.

"You *decided* to use me?" exclaimed Neil, sitting upright and looking at the conspirators with a puzzlement that made them laugh outright.

"Of course we did," said Jean, smiling at him. "You were never a free agent, though you thought you were. We just turned you round our little finger."

"You see, if Televant had gone back with the news that I had died," the minister explained, "we would not have known what was going on at Dorning House. They might have grown suspicious, especially if there was no sign of a police demonstration. Besides, we wanted, if possible, to keep the whole thing dark from the villagers."

"You failed in that, anyhow," said Neil. "Mr Morrison heard the constable ring up——"

"Mr Morrison is in the know," said the minister. "And Sandy Johnston never rang up anybody. That was our subtle way of convincing you that the thing was genuine. If Rab had come to you with the news, how were we to know that you'd believe him? But a policeman 'phoning for help, and you merely overhearing him—how could you suspect? Then Rab dropped in with confirmation."

"Mr Morrison must be a natural born actor," declared Neil disgustedly. "I never for a moment suspected the genuineness of his astonishment."

"Oh, he was genuine enough until you'd gone," said Murdoch. "And then Rab explained the whole affair, and got him to promise to keep it to himself. Outside of those present now, the only people who know that anything unusual has happened are Dr Boag, Sandy Johnston (for whose good offices we are indebted to Rab), Mr Morrison,

and Ronald Aitken, who nearly threw a fit when I turned up alive this morning. We can count on the silence of all of them."

"I still don't see how you could be so sure that I would carry the news to the Signorina," said Neil. "You knew she had sacked me."

"Don't you remember meeting me in the village the other day?" asked Jean slyly. "I questioned you then about my cousin, and found that you were still loyal to her."

"We counted on one of two things, McNeil," explained Murdoch. "Either you'd bolt right off to Dorning House with the news, or you'd go to the manse——"

"In which case we knew that we could safely leave you in the hands of Jean," said Mrs Murdoch with a meaning smile.

"If you'd shown no sign of doing either, Rab was prepared to pile on the agony about the state of affairs at the manse. But it wasn't necessary. You rose to the bait beautifully, and Jean did the rest."

Neil looked at Jean curiously. She blushed and turned her eyes away.

"So you were quite sure you could turn me round your little finger?" he said.

"I didn't fail, did I?" she answered him.

"Well, of all the utterly unprincipled rogues that I've ever heard of in fact or fiction," said Neil, turning from one to another of the party, "you people are easily the first. Mrs Mur-

doch, I must congratulate you on pulling off a bluff that would make a Yankee poker-player turn green with envy. Rab, you should really go on the stage. That touch of pathos about the widow and her wee bairn was fine. Mr Murdoch, I was brought up in the Kirk of Scotland, but I can't remember hearing of a minister of that Kirk ever rising to such heights of mendacity as you have touched. As for you, Jean——"

"Yes?" said the girl, challenging him with her eyes.

"You've made a thundering ass of me, and, as you know, I wouldn't have helped you to success wittingly, but I can't say I'm sorry to see you here."

"Thank you, Neil," she said quietly, lowering her eyes.

Then, as if to turn the talk into a channel of less embarrassment to her, she went on—

"One thing weighs on my mind—my cousin Francesca. I can't bear to think of her with the weight of Mr Murdoch's death on her conscience, wondering about the world in constant fear of being caught."

"It serves her jolly well right," said the minister's wife sharply, probably with the picture of her husband's scratched face before her eyes.

"It does that," agreed Rab. "If it hadna been for the tin shirt that I brocht frae Embro, she'd ha'e pit her knife in his hairt richt eneuch. She was an awfu' wuman, an' the man she gets 'll no' ha'e the life o' a wurrum."

Neil told them of Francesca's designs upon the unfortunate Bubbly, and of the prospective bridegroom's reluctance.

"I have no sympathy with him, anyhow," said Murdoch. "He told me that he wrote the lay sermon in the 'Better Land.' Actually boasted of it! No fate can be too awful for a man who could be guilty of such sententious tosh. But I agree with you about your cousin, Jean. We can't let her remain under the belief that she has killed a man. The trouble will be to get the news to her, for, naturally, she won't advertise her whereabouts."

"I shall be able to help there, if she fulfils her promise to write to me," said Neil. "I made her agree to let me have her address in case I had cause to send her any warning."

"We can't tell her the truth until the month is up, unfortunately," said Murdoch. "We can't afford to take the risk of her returning to the attack. We have quite enough on our hands with Rufus Rintoul, and I am thoroughly afraid of that gentleman. I'll never know a moment's ease of mind until the qualifying period is over."

"It seems to me," said Neil, "that I do nothing but play unconsciously into your hands, Jean."

"You certainly did last night," she agreed, with a little smile of triumph.

"Yes, but I did it to a far greater extent than you have

any idea of. Not content with running one of your rivals out of the country, I captured the other and held him prisoner."

"What! You've got Rufus Rintoul?" cried the minister.

"I have—in a very safe place," confirmed Neil. "So safe, that for the moment he is harmless."

"Then we've no' but tae keep him there, an' we've won oot," said Rab gleefully.

"Provided I don't let him loose," said Neil. "You see, I'm not one of your party. You have deluded and deceived me, and led me to drive my own ex-mistress out of the country. Why should I hand your uncle over to you, Jean?"

"Just because you will, Neil," said Jean quietly. "And I *won't* be blackmailed," she added meaningly.

Neil saw enough in her eyes as she looked into his, to tell him all he wanted to know. In the presence of three witnesses he had, for all practical purposes, proposed and been accepted.

To hide his exultation and Jean's embarrassment, he told them in full his adventures of the previous night, a tale that was listened to with breathless interest. It was the first they knew definitely of the underground passage, though, of course, they had suspected its existence ever since Rufus's first dramatic appearance at Dorning House.

"An' he's doon there noo?" asked Rab, at the conclusion of the story.

"He is, poor devil," said Neil. "He must be pretty well paralysed. I've had time to think to-day, and if you will agree to a compromise, Jean, I believe you can have the Dorn-ning estate without dragging on for a month in constant anxiety."

"I'll agree to anything—you like—Neil," said Jean.

"That's a bet," cried Neil. "I'm going to remind you of it later. Wait here, all of you, until I come back."

He snatched a decanter of brandy and a glass from the dresser, and hurried away.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Thank Heaven you've come back, McNeil. I'm losing interest in my own society. Have you brought a drink?"

The voice was weak, and the man's face was drawn and haggard, but his words showed no loss of spirit. McNeil stuck up, in their own grease, two candles he had brought from the candelabra in the dining-room, and then, pouring out a stiff tot of brandy, held it to Rintoul's lips.

"Ah! That's better," said Rufus, with a sigh of satisfaction. "But man cannot live by brandy alone. Have you brought no food?"

"I hope to take you to a square meal in a few minutes, if you're in a reasonable frame of mind," replied Neil.

Already Rintoul's voice was stronger, and his dulled eyes brighter.

"That sounds very like the preamble to an attempt at coercion," he said. "Do you think I'm a man that would sell his birthright for a dish of bacon and eggs?" He groaned slightly, and added, "Though

the very sound of the words is a temptation."

"I'm going to loosen off these straps and then we can talk," said Neil. "In your present numbed condition I think I can risk it. I'll let your legs loose first, and when you've stretched them a bit, I'll tie them up again and give your arms a turn."

"Your caution is a compliment," said Rufus, moving his released legs slowly and painfully.

"Now, look here, Rintoul, let's look this thing in the face," began Neil, looking down on his captive. "I've got you here, and I can keep you as long as I like. You haven't got a chance to escape. To make assurance doubly sure, I could even arrange to close up the old well shaft, so that even if you got rid of the straps you would still be a prisoner. You see that, don't you?"

"As you put it, it certainly sounds plausible—and unpleasant. I gather you have an alternative?"

"I have," agreed Neil. "It's no pleasure to me to keep you

down here. Suppose that you could, by signing a paper, set yourself free, and at the same time assure yourself of a settled income for the rest of your life, what would you say ? ”

“ It would obviously depend on the size of the income,” replied Rufus at once.

“ Then you are prepared to negotiate ? ” asked Neil.

“ I would be, if there were a solid basis on which to negotiate ; but there isn’t. I would be signing away my chance, and your mistress might afterwards be dislodged before she had qualified.”

Neil smiled. Rufus, of course, believed that it was still Francesca who held sway overhead.

“ I think we could get over that difficulty,” he said. “ Give me your parole, and we’ll go upstairs and talk it over with the interested party.”

“ I should hardly have thought it necessary,” said Rufus. “ My niece’s band of heroes, as she calls them, should be sufficient to overcome one man.”

“ Perhaps. But I’d rather have your word. There is such a thing as guile as well as force, and, unbound, I’d never feel sure I had you safe.”

Rufus was silent for a time. He was not a man who would readily throw up the sponge, but there was no escaping from the facts.

“ I give you my word,” he said at last, spitting the words out as though they tasted bitter in his mouth.

“ That you will return here

quietly and let yourself be tied up, without resisting, if the negotiations fail ? ” demanded Neil relentlessly.

“ Ay, even that. There’s no alternative,” agreed the beaten man.

Neil undid the remaining strap and chafed Rintoul’s numbed arms. It was some little time before he was fit to climb the steps, and when he did, it was with the assistance of Neil’s arm. Neil took him to a bathroom and supplied him with brushes and towels.

“ Wait here until I come back,” he said. “ I’m going to arrange for a meal for you.”

“ Bacon and eggs,” demanded Rufus. “ I’ll negotiate on nothing else.”

Neil found Ronald Aitken in his pantry, still dazed with astonishment at the happenings of the past twenty-four hours, and with delight at the triumph of his beloved Miss Jean.

“ It’ll be ready in half an’ oor,” he said, in answer to Neil’s request. “ I’ve got a lassie in the kitchen that comes in frae the hame fairm. She’s a rare haun’ at fryin’ eggs.”

Neil felt that in fairness to Rufus he should have a meal before the parley was held, and he informed the waiting party in the smoking-room of the cause of the delay.

When, an hour later, he led his prisoner to the conclave, Rufus showed little sign of the ordeal that he had gone through. He could not hide his astonishment, however, at sight of Jean

and her friends in place of Francesca.

"What's this, McNeil? Have you turned renegade?" he exclaimed, pausing in the doorway and looking from face to face in a puzzled manner. "Man, I wouldn't have believed it of you."

"Come in, Uncle Rufus, and let us explain," said Jean, coming forward to meet him. "There is a great deal to tell you."

"Evidently," said Rufus drily. "Well, I don't know but what I'd sooner see you in the Big House than the other one, if I can't have it myself. My main objection to you is the company you keep, Jean. I don't hold with either poachers or preachers."

He looked truculently at the minister, who, however, was determined to keep the peace if possible. Rab was also judiciously silent, and Mrs Murdoch remained in the background.

"Don't try to start a row, Rintoul," said Neil good-humouredly. "Sit down and listen to all that has happened."

Between them, each telling the parts that they knew best, Jean and Neil related all that had occurred from the time that Rufus had escaped from Meath. He listened eagerly, but almost without comment, though his green eyes twinkled with amusement at the story of the deception of Francesca, and he laughed outright at the vision of her fleeing the country, drag-

ging the reluctant Bubbly in her train.

"I'm level with him, anyhow, for drugging me with my own dope," he said gleefully. "Poor devil, I don't envy him his fate. As for you, niece, you deserve to win, though but for the ill-luck of McNeil blundering into the tunnel I'd give you a good run for your money yet. As for you, sir," and here he turned to Murdoch with a half-quizzical, half-apologetic look, "I withdraw my observations. I've never taken kindly to the cloth, but then I've never met a wearer of it who could stretch his conscience the way you can—or, if they did, they wouldn't have the pluck to admit it."

"Is that a testimonial, now, or a libel?" asked Murdoch, with a smile.

"It depends on the point of view," replied Rufus. "I would hardly recommend you to retail it to your elders, though no doubt old Ronald will find a text to justify you. He's a great admirer of both Jean and yourself, and he'll not be satisfied until he has proved that every step you've taken is strictly orthodox. But this is purely a business meeting, and we are wandering from the point. I understand from McNeil that you have a proposition to put before me, Jean?"

"The suggestion is mine," said Neil. "You know my point—that, situated as you are, your case is hopeless, but that, rather than have the worry of keeping you prisoner

for a month, we'd be prepared to offer you reasonable terms to sign away your chance."

"And you know my answer—that it all depends on the terms."

"It's up to you now, Jean," said Neil. "How far are you prepared to go to get full possession of your inheritance?"

"I don't know what my inheritance is worth, to begin with," said Jean diffidently. "You remember, Uncle Rufus, that you came to the manse and made me an offer? Suppose I made you the same offer now?"

"Five hundred pounds a year?" said Rufus slowly, his eyes upon his niece. "You'll bear in mind that I was prepared to pay that to *each* of you. Now you have no concern with your cousin. She's out of the game. Double your offer, and I'm your man."

"You forget, Mr Rintoul," protested Murdoch, "that the circumstances are somewhat different, or at least you ignore it. At the time you made the offer all three had an equal chance, and you were buying these chances. To-day one is eliminated, and the second—yourself—is next door to eliminated."

"Very well, if we can't agree, we can't," said Rufus calmly. "Take me away, McNeil, and strap me up. Maybe my chance is not so small as you think."

"But, uncle, how can I promise you all that money?" cried Jean. "I don't know

what the estate is worth. Can't we manage to settle it somehow?"

She looked beseechingly from Rufus to Neil in search of an amicable solution.

Rufus Rintoul laughed heartily.

"You have a shrewd fear of me yet, I see," he declared, "for all your bluff. Ay, lass, your Uncle Rufus is a difficult man to keep tied up for a month."

"May I make a suggestion?" asked Neil, and seeing assent upon the faces around him, went on: "As the value of the estate is problematical, why not fix the thing on a percentage basis? What would you say to ten per cent of the net income?"

"Free of income tax?" demanded Rufus quickly.

"You'll not miss anything for lack of asking," said Murdoch drily.

"If you agree to that it will be more like fifteen per cent, Jean," explained Neil aside.

"Even then, to have it all settled at once——" said Jean hesitatingly.

Rufus Rintoul was thinking deeply, and busy with lightning calculations. He had more knowledge of the value of the estate than any one present.

"Ten per cent free of income tax and I'll sell my birthright," he announced suddenly. "Is it a bargain, niece? It's my last word. Refuse and I'll beat you yet, if I have to chew through McNeil's straps and dig my way out with my nails."

It was to Neil that Jean looked for advice, which, on the face of it, was gross ingratitude to the Murdochs.

"I think it's worth it, Jean," said Neil, answering her eyes. "I'll admit that the responsibility of keeping your uncle out of mischief for a month would turn my hair grey."

"Mr Murdoch, what do you think?" asked Jean, tardily remembering the debt she owed to the minister.

"I think you'll be well quit of him at the price," declared Murdoch bluntly.

"Then it's a bargain, uncle," said Jean, turning with a smile to Rufus.

"And we'll have it in black and white right away," said Neil with a sigh of relief.

It was left to the minister to draw up the document in which Rufus Rintoul relinquished all claim to the home of his fathers, and he carried out the work with the utmost care, anxious that there might be no loophole of escape of which a cunning lawyer might take advantage.

"This will do for to-night, I think," he said, after reading slowly through what he had written. "To-morrow we must go to Edinburgh, and have the thing properly done by the family lawyer."

"You could safely trust me without all this formality, now I've given my word," said Rufus drily. "But if it'll ease your minds, here goes."

He signed the document with

a good grace, being something of a philosopher, and not given to crying over spilt milk.

"Well, it's been a very sporting event," he remarked, as he laid down the pen. "We've all had a good run for our money, and I, for one, bear you no ill-will, niece. I doubt if your cousin will say the same when she hears the truth."

"Thank you, uncle, you are a weight off my mind," said Jean, with a sigh of relief. "I suppose it would be too much to ask you to stop and have supper with us all?"

"My dear lass, I've told you I bear no ill-will, and notwithstanding my recent meal, I've still got room."

The meal that followed partook of the nature of a celebration, and Rufus rose to the occasion nobly. He seemed determined that no sign of his disappointment should be discernible to those who had defeated him, and he was free in his congratulations to Jean, to Mrs Murdoch on the skill of her plot, to the minister on his monstrous deceit, even to Rab Wilson upon his part in the play, though inwardly he protested against the presence of the local poacher in the home of his fathers.

Later in the evening he and Neil left for the Rintoul Arms, having arranged a trip to Edinburgh next day to put into legal form the agreement that had been come to.

CHAPTER XXX.

Two days later Neil and Jean Rintoul met in the gardens of Dorning Castle, not exactly by appointment, yet by no stretch of imagination could it be called pure chance. It was in the old grass-grown courtyard where they had first met so many years ago, that the girl turned upon her companion with a smile that had a trace of mischief in it.

"You haven't changed much since I met you here as a boy, Neil," she said.

"How do you mean? I've grown considerably, and the war has altered me so that I am hardly recognisable."

"I was thinking of 'dares,'" said Jean. "You shouted down the well because I dared you then, and three nights ago you climbed down it in the dark——"

"But not because you dared me. That was because you diddled me. However, it's a small matter. We won't squabble over it, especially as this will be our last meeting—for a long time."

"Our last meeting?" repeated Jean, looking up at him quickly. "You didn't tell me you were going away."

"Because I hadn't made up my mind. I have now," said Neil with serious face. "I'm going away to make my fortune, or at least to have a jolly good try at it."

"And if you succeed?"

"I'm coming back again.

I'm going to meet you here, and I'm going to challenge you to a new dare."

Jean was silent for a little time, looking down at the green turf by her little feet.

"And if you fail?" she asked very softly, without raising her eyes.

"I shall not come back," said Neil harshly.

"Neil—don't you think—that will be very—unsatisfactory for me?" she asked slowly.

"There is no other course open to me," he answered, with a melancholy shrug of his broad shoulders.

"Oh yes, there is," retorted Jean quickly.

Summoning all her courage, she straightened herself and looked her lover in the face.

"There is, Neil," she said boldly. "You must dare me now—I dare you to!"

He did not answer, but turned his back on the girl.

"You make it very hard for me," she went on. "When you were a boy you did not fear a dare. Now you are a coward. You want to go away and leave me in ignorance of your dare, yet you say you may never come back, and I may never know what you would dare me to. Neil—is it fair?"

"I should not have spoken at all," he stammered harshly.

He did not turn to her, but his fingers, twisted painfully behind his back, were as ex-

pressive to her as his face could have been.

"I know what you are thinking," she went on. "And it makes me furious. You are one of these wretched men who will not be beholden to a girl for anything. You must make your fortune first. Why have you no fortune? Isn't it because for five years you have been at war, fighting to preserve my fortune for me? But no, nothing will do but you must be upsides with me in every way. It's just pure sinful pride, Neil McNeil, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Jean," said Neil painfully, turning to her at last, "you know that I would give the world to tell you, but it wouldn't be right. Now, I sometimes almost wish you had lost the wretched estate."

"You think too much of the wretched estate and too little of the wretched girl you would leave behind," retorted Jean. "Come, Neil, I dare you to speak, and if you won't I will challenge you to a dare—that no gentleman would refuse."

Neil shook his head doggedly.

"No, it wouldn't be right," he said dourly. "I am not in a position to——"

"Very well, Neil McNeil," said Jean, her face a rosy red, and her eyes sparkling with mischief. "Then just you listen to my dare."

She came close up to him, her hands clasped behind her, and looked up in his face as she had done when a little girl.

"I dare you to marry me."

"Jean, it's not right," exclaimed Neil.

Right or wrong, his arms were around her, and her hands were clasped across his shoulders. Somewhere in a muffled voice, he heard the words—

"And if you don't, I don't want to see you ever again, and if I do I won't speak to you."

He knew that further resistance was impossible.

A few weeks later a strangely contrasted couple—whose names appeared upon the hotel register as Mr and Mrs Watson of London—were breakfasting in a hotel in Copenhagen. Mrs Watson was a tall handsome woman who drew all eyes as she passed through a lounge or dining-room—a woman with a world of tragedy in her eyes, a hunted look upon her face. Mr Watson shared with her the hunted look, but had none of the dignity of his companion.

In the presence of the waiter they were strangely silent these two, and it was only when securely out of earshot that they spoke other than the merest commonplaces. They had chosen an isolated table, as was their habit, and, the waiter being gone for the moment, Mrs Watson turned her great dark eyes upon Mr Watson and spoke. He shrank visibly at the sound of her voice, though it was so richly melodious, for he had grown to hate the sound of it, so much had it become associated with one topic and one alone—a topic

which he, had he had his way, would have striven to blot from his mind.

"Is it not strange, Thomas, that we still have no word from him?" she said in low rich tones that would have thrilled any one less obviously fearful. "I canna understand it. And the papers that we have had! Not a word of the murder!"

Mr Watson squirmed in his chair.

"Will you never learn to stop using that word?" he whispered fearfully and petulantly. "One of these days some one will hear it."

"One of these days, Mio Dio, the thought of it will burn a hole in my head and I shall die," she retorted tragically.

"Sh! Here comes the waiter."

The waiter bore upon his tray a letter, addressed to Mrs Watson.

"At last!" she exclaimed, seizing it and tearing it open, her fingers trembling with excitement.

"Is it wise to read it here?" asked Mr Watson, his eyes glancing furtively towards the other tables, fearful of observation.

"I cannot wait. I must know the worst. It may be that they are on our track!"

Her great eyes burned into the closely-written sheet. Mr Watson watched her tremblingly, fearful of some indiscretion. Nothing that he anticipated, however, could compare with the sensation of the actual event.

Mrs Watson started suddenly to her feet, flinging the letter from her, and sweeping to the floor with a crash much of the crockery upon the table. Her eyes blazed with rage, and her face was the face of a fury.

"Francesca! For God's sake!" gasped her companion, in an ecstasy of fear.

"Traitor! Traitor! Traitor!" she cried, her voice swelling with the reiteration, so that guests at other tables turned all their curious attention upon the pair.

"Oh, that I had his throat within these fingers!" she cried, stretching her graceful arms before her. "How I would press the life from his false soul!"

"For God's sake, Francesca! Everybody's staring at us. You'll give the whole show away."

For answer, she threw back her head and laughed wildly.

"What is there to give?" she cried. "Read for yourself. Guid sakes, man, there has been no murder done. We are fools—fools—fools! We were betrayed by your friend—the devil McNeil! But I will go back. I will tear his false tongue from his lying throat. I will——"

She threw herself into her chair and, her mood changing with its customary rapidity, buried her head within her arms upon the disordered table, and burst into a passion of wild sobs.

Bubbly, glancing hurriedly down the sheet, gathered enough to understand the cause of her outburst. Taking advantage of her new mood, he succeeded in leading her from the publicity of the dining-hall, through an avenue of curious eyes, to the privacy of their own apartment. There he may be left to reason with her, poor devil, an occupation in which he need not be envied.

Francesca never fulfilled her threats. Dorning saw her no more, yet her name did not sink into oblivion, even in that outlying village.

From his 'Scotsman' one morning, fully a year later, Major McNeil looked up across the breakfast table.

"Listen to this, Jean. It's

an account of the new production at Covent Garden.

"Yet notwithstanding the mediocrity of the score and the poverty of the libretto, there is no denying the overwhelming success of the new opera. The marvellous singing and adorable acting of Francesca Marinetti, the Corsican contralto, lifted the whole entertainment to a level far beyond its deserts, and placed her once and for all at the very highest pinnacle of her profession."

"What do you think of your cousin now, Jean?"

"Hush a minute, Neil. Is that Rufus crying? Whatever can Nancy be doing to the child!"

And Neil McNeil was left alone with his 'Scotsman.'

(Conclusion.)

A WELSH RIDE.

BY EDMUND VALE.

ON a warm evening in the month of June I turned my back on the Chiltern Hills, and set my face towards the mountains of Ardudwy, in the far land of Wales. My conveyance was a well-made bicycle, my company a red Irish setter. We left Chinnor, well loaded, and well found by nature with a following wind, which speeded us favourably and played merrily in the feathering of Roc's tail. We were soon passing through Thame, with its great broad thoroughfare. So royal is the road through Thame that a fair with swing-boats and merry-go-rounds can be held in the street and still leave two wide highways for the traveller. On the right hand I passed an old Tudor building that was formerly a grammar-school. Here that fine quiet man, Tom Elwood the Quaker, the friend of George Fox and William Penn, and pupil of Milton, first learned his Latin under the birchen sceptre. Here also John Hampden, mortally wounded on Chalgrove Field, was brought to die.

Outside the little town we took the road for the north, and crossed the river Thame, a tranquil stream that falls through pleasant water-meadows into the Thames basin. In its waters abound

those curious little monsters, the fresh-water crawfish. At one time the catching of them in snare-nets and the selling of them in the Thame market was quite an industry. The low-lying land crossed, the road led us sharply up to Long Crendon, and sharply down again, and presently the pretty wooded heights of Brill stood up on our right hand.

This road had all the charms of the old English highway before the scarifying era of motordom. Generous margins of grass, great umbrageous hedgerows, dark, overhanging, and shining with may like cresting billows, delighted the eye of the traveller, and smacked richly of coney to the nostril of the Irish setter. At a turn we opened up a remarkable vista, near a quarter of a mile in length, of donkeys and horses, some feeding, some reposing in the road, some rolling with flying hoofs. Having steered precariously through their midst without finding that they had any human supervision, we came suddenly on an encampment of gipsies. They were withdrawn from the road on to the grass margin. Two caravans were pulled up under the hedge, and their occupants formed two groups on the grass. Two kettles boiled, two tea-parties were

in progress, and an elderly man sat apart smoking in a Windsor chair, like a chief watching over the harmony of two tribes.

I got off my bicycle and introduced Roc, explaining that he was thirsty. A girl came forward and proffered a bucket with water. She was indeed a queen of the woods, this girl: supple in figure and of a splendid carriage, with abundant dark hair sweeping to a plait over gold earrings, and eyes of a pigment yet unnamed flashing with merriment. As sparks are struck from a ringing anvil in a dark smithy, so she lifted her glance to me as she laughed and caressed the drinking dog.

"A Scout gentleman, no doubt?" said the old man in the Windsor chair. This he had deduced from the football shorts in which I was habited. I said him nay. "A gentleman from the Oxford College?" said the next senior, who presided over the group nearest to the caravans. This also proving beside the mark, the darkest of the gipsy ladies, with a necklace three strings deep in red coral, hazarded, "A sporting gentleman he is, by his dog." I agreed to this definition. I told them that I was going to Wales. "Wales!" said three of them at once, and paused. It seemed to bring pictures to them of nights on cool upland moors, and days trafficking with mountain ponies, and evenings stealing a march on keepers by the great

water-floods where the salmon lurked. "Wales!" they said again, and shook their heads.

I asked them if they spoke Romany, on which the second senior reeled off a long vocabulary of Romany nouns with their English equivalents, asking me at the end if I knew that much. Before I had time to answer, the old man jerked the clay pipe from his mouth with a deprecating gesture.

"You can't speak Romany proper, none of you," said he. The youths and the women raised objections to this. "No, you can't, none of you!" he said. His clean-shaven jaw was square, his mouth firm and menacing. His eyes were like those of the young girl, but in him they glittered. He looked sharply from one to the other. "None of you can't!" said he. "You know just enough words for when there's a copper or a keeper about, but you can't say everything in Romany without no English. And all except *you*"—he pointed to the elder woman—"haven't got the Romany way in talking neither, not the soft deep voice. Oh, it's all gone! They've left the open and took to houses. They've married with foreigners. It's all gone! Don't tell me different!"

Here the girl who had taken pity on Roc now offered his master a cup of tea. And she proffered it with an expression of fair mobile features, as if to give were a poem of womanhood, without words, easy for her to recite.

The talk fell on hedgehogs, their excellence in eating, how they should be hunted, and how prepared for the table. The old man told tales of the hedgehog-hunting dogs he had known, and the elder woman, who was his wife, brought to mind the rich feasts of the past. I asked the Second Senior if he had soldiered during the war. He told me that he had served in nine different units. In spite of this varied experience, the main thing that impressed him was the wiles of a certain conscript who in civil life was a bath-chair proprietor. The genius of this man was engaged in a struggle, not with the enemy, but with the competent military authority. All the machinery of discipline, including sergeants, sergeant-majors, orderly rooms and courts-martial, could not break the civilian spirit of this inveterate bath-chairman. Even after he had wormed his way out of the service, and they tried to make him labour on the land, he defeated them. "And he was that quiet and innocent," said my informant, "you'd think that one of the old ladies he used to drag round could have knocked him down with a feather!"

While the adventures of the bath-chairman had been spoken and acted, the girl who had befriended Roc and me was so overcome with mirth that she rolled on the ground panting with laughter. One of the youths, thinking this wild conduct unbecoming in the pres-

ence of a *gorgio*, rebuked her. Instantly she sat up and embraced her knees, looking as fierce and sullen as an insulted Cleopatra who has no hope of retaliation.

"Have you been to school?" I inquired, venturing to address her.

"Four years," said the elder woman, who was her mother.

"At a board school?" I asked.

"No. With the Catholics," said the woman.

"Are you a Catholic?" said I to the girl.

"No," said the woman, "although she's religious like me. But the Catholics teaches them quick. They can learn them everything in four years."

"*She's* the schollar!" said the old man, pointing with his pipe at the wife of the Second Senior. "She reads novels. When I was young we couldn't, none of us, read nor write. We had to get our letters written for us and read for us. When I was courting *her*"—his pipe-stem indicated the dark lady with the coral necklace—"I wanted to write her a loving letter. I had to go to a man that could do such like. And I said to him, 'Can you write a loving letter?' 'Yes, I can,' he said. 'Put what's the most affectionate beginning,' I said. So he began 'Madam.' She wasn't no scholar, and when the letter was made out to her, she was insulted—*insulted*!"

The sky was red with sunset and the moon risen when

Roc and I left this pleasant company and rode through the quiet old town of Bicester and on down the straight Roman road to Middleton Stoney. Here we fell among old friends, and feasted by moonlight in an enchanted garden where no breeze stirred, guarded by the silvery sweep of cedars, and overwatched by elms as massive in their shadow as their bulk.

Of Roc's first master more will never be known than that he died fighting for his country. Roc I first beheld a bedraggled, mud-foundered object, looking wistfully at me from a shell-hole, four days after the battle of Arras. It was in the neighbourhood of Roclincourt, where the front line had been before the advance. He looked at me, and weakly cocked his ears. He had the head of an Irish setter, and a singularly beautiful head at that, but what the rest of him might be was impossible to say. It was a rare thing to see a thoroughbred dog in France. But such Roc proved to be. His age was computed at six months. Many adventures did we have together in France. Once he held up a battalion coming out of the line with fixed bayonets, supposing the trench that they walked into belonged to me. Once when rations were low did he procure us a leg of mutton from a neighbouring unit. One time he was stolen and taken miles away

on a lorry, but returned in twenty-four hours. And, besides all, he did many clever things, the which if they were told would hardly be credited. Roc has a fine genial nature. He is unprovoking among his race, but a surprising fighter when attacked. He is a great dog, and in his company his master fears no social disparagement.

We left Middleton Stoney along the road that leads to Heyford. The country here is open and rolling, and where the bare earth shows it is a warm terra-cotta colour. Here and there were fields of red lucerne ripe for the mower, and other fields yellow with charlock enlivening the landscape. The road was as rustic as could be wished, and few motors were encountered. At the bottom of a steep dingle we paused by a stream, that Roc might refresh his inner and outer man in the water.

"That's a fine dog, master; I say that's a fine dog!" I looked up to the stone bridge that carried the road across the brook and saw over the parapet a white-whiskered countenance lit by a pair of small shrewd eyes and shaded by a wideawake hat.

"Yes," I said.

"Reckon he's worth a smart lot," said the other.

"Do you want to buy him?" said I.

"No thought further," said he. "Reckon he's faithful."

I went on to the bridge. There was a house with a

strange name marked on my map. It lay about a mile farther on. I asked my aged acquaintance what such a name could signify.

"That's by the old Turnpike House," said he. "Used to be a Public, days gone by."

"Why did they call it by that name?" said I.

"My grandfather's grandfather couldn't tell you that," said he, "but in my recollection they had a whistling pint horn there."

"What is a whistling pint horn?" said I.

"They gave you a pint in a horn," said he. "You drank out of one end all in a breath, and then if you could do that and blow the whistle in the other end all in the *same* breath the pint was a present. But if you couldn't do it all in the one breath you had to pay for a quart."

"And was the beer then better than the beer now?" said I.

"There's no shank in the beer now," said he. "It isn't beer."

"Do you remember the Turnpike Gate?" I asked.

"The Turnpike Gate!" said he with sudden warmth, as if this were a subject on which he had lavished much thought—"the Turnpike Gate! Of course I do. That's where the Government made the mistake of their lives. They ought never to have took down the Turnpike Gates. Charging a shilling a gate to the motors, look what a smart sum they'd

have made! And only them as used the roads would be to pay. Instead of that it's all done in rates and taxes, and the poor man has to help pave a way for them as shovels dust into his house and on his garden flowers by the bag-load. The Government made the mistake of their lives—I say they made the mistake of their lives over taking down the Turnpike Gates."

Trundling ourselves out of this pleasant little valley on the bottom gear, we came on to an upland where the red sainfoin flourished abundantly, but now there was no blue sky and sunlight to make it startle the landscape, for low-tangled clouds like fresh sheared wool had spread overhead seeming to threaten thunder. Passing the aforetime public-house and site of the Turnpike Gate we came to a fork in the roads marked Gagingwell. Here on the right hand were some ugly brick cottages, and on the left in a wide island of grass the base of an old stone cross. This little ruin looked thoroughly unkempt. An elder-bush sprouted up beside it. But even so it touched the heart and stirred the sentiment as a nobler relic should, and with an added home-thrust spoke of Time's hand that crumbles the material symbol, but has no power over the spiritual ideal to which it was raised.

A boy who was chewing a licorice-stick, or in the time-honoured vernacular "sucking

Spanish," I applied to for information as to this old cross whose steps alone remained, but he could tell me nothing.

"Were you born here?" said I.

"Yes," said he.

"And you never heard anything about it?"

"No," said he.

A man came slowly out of the house and pointed to the stones. "That there," said he, "is all it is. It's nothing else but that there."

Very soon the road led us downhill into a little village. My map informed me that it was called Enstone. Maps are absurdly practical things. They must account for every square inch of everywhere but the sea. If it had not been for the map, I should easily have persuaded myself that this place was a temporary vision of mediævalism fallen inadvertently out of the lap of Time across my path, presently to vanish and never more be seen of men. Such a charm was in its old houses, its old people, and its winding ways, that I went warily lest a bicycle should shock folk as an unheard-of innovation. But a practical point was soon established—to wit, the procurability of bread-and-cheese and a glass of ale. Yet the inn was in keeping with the rest, and mine host in keeping with his inn. In the parlour of this hostelry was a target for darts made of the section of a trunk of a tree and quartered with numbers.

Dart-holes by the thousand had given it a spongy look, but on the wall, which was also of wood, the perforations wide of the mark were so manifold that places were eaten out as if the rats had gnawed them, indicating with what good cheer the dart-throwers often went to work.

"What interesting thing is to be seen in this place?" said I.

The landlord thought a minute. "There's the arch," said he.

"What arch?" said I.

A member of the landlord's family dining in an unrevealed apartment answered from obscurity, "It's got a head on it and a seat on each side."

"It's very old," said the landlord; "they don't know what it's for."

"About how old, I wonder?" said I.

"I've heard it's Roman," said mine host.

"Roman," corroborated the landlord's family all in chorus, like a final Amen.

The arch in question abutted on the end of a little cottage. It was in reality a fanciful grotto of the Georgian period with artificial rocks, and with a bust over its entrance and a niche on either side. An old woman who lived close by told me that she had learned it had been built a hundred years ago by a rich lady as a summer-house. The bust, she said, was that of Russell. The church of Enstone is a wonderful architectural epitome, and reflects

all states of the Churchman's thought from the idealist of the early ages to the materialist of the last century, who loved a hideous exhibition of zigzag scrolls displaying texts. In the graveyard one is somewhat astounded by the impious assurance of a departed parishioner who utters complaisantly with the Psalmist—

"I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness."

Roc had been absent during my tour of inspection. He now rejoined me, having also been investigating according to his lights. It used to be his custom in France when his master's unit moved into a new village to reconnoitre all the fleshpots in the neighbourhood. He has an infallible architectural instinct which leads him immediately to discover the kitchen of any house he enters. Once there he relies on his genteel appearance and his way with the ladies, which seldom fails of the desired effect. There is no air of the mendicant about him on these occasions. He prosecutes his excursions in a business-like way, wasting no time on unappreciative people or meagre establishments; and if a cat should fly before him he does not fritter moments and energy in a futile chase of such an inedible baggage, but goes in the opposite direction, making shrewd guesswork for the saucer of milk that is bound to be hard by.

Soon after leaving Enstone we got into the main thorough-

fare from Oxford to Worcester, with its hideous black-tarred surface, its close-cropped edgings, and its telegraph-poles. Motor-bicycles whizzed by like angry hornets bound on vindictive missions, clacking hideously, and motor-cars whined drearily from horizon to horizon. We deviated from this depressing highway, where it turns down to Chipping Norton, as we had it in mind to see some remains of the Stone Age men, an agreeable anticipation sorting ill with the evil savour of petrol. The clouds still threatened thunder. It was windless, and in the hush a certain expectancy was abroad as if an incense of the earth ascended in prayer for rain. Here on the Rollright Hill it was noticeable how the may was giving place to the wild rose, for there was a wonderful unfolding of blossom and perfume in the high hedges on both sides. By a sharp turn to the left we rose up on to a ridge, which commanded a spacious prospect of the Cotswold Hills on the one hand and of the heights round Chipping Norton on the other. The simple little road over this exposed place, the fine expanse of view, a touch of wildness in the hill-top cultivation, and the proximity of thunder, filled me with right-mindedness for seeing Druidical remains. The first to show up should be on my right, a monolith called the King Stone. Presently it appeared: a strange hunched shape, surrounded by shining

black railings, full six feet high, with sharp spikes turned rim-like outwards. A piece of sheet-iron painted white and bearing some legend of the Office of Works leaned up against and ticketed the venerable rock. The whole effect was of a monkey in a cage. I had no heart to get off and see more. A couple of hundred yards farther, on the left hand, were the Stones. This is a fine circle. The stones are irregularly shaped and closely set, but not of imposing dimensions. Fitted tight round the circle like a choker collar is an iron railing. A key to the enclosure was to be had elsewhere.

I got off perfunctorily to look, but felt I could take no pleasure in the thing. The preservation of ancient monuments seems to be sadly misunderstood in this country. When will people learn that it is illusion and not fact that gives pleasure? Fact is the passion now, and we are ten times worse vandals than our ignorant ancestors, who on occasions made gateposts of cromlechs and quarried stone from decaying abbeys. They were ignorant and haphazardly superstitious. We are knowledgeable and matter of fact. We confound art and archæology, and pinch our imagination painfully, only allowing it liberty to walk abroad in the pointed shoes of accuracy. In this spirit we handle our ancient castles. We tear down the ivy and the moss that for centuries

has been the delight of poets and painters. We expose and scarify. We plaster and point and rebuild so that nothing but the work of the twentieth-century mason is apparent. We replace a Ruin by a Folly. Thus we can no longer hand ourselves back through the ages by touching a stone and saying, "This stone did see the very features of Margaret of Anjou. This other stone did hear the screams of the tortured, the sobs of the broken-hearted." No! It is the spiritual quality of Illusion, the handmaid of Romance, in which we value the relics of the past, and our great heritage of such things should not be left to the care of the specialist in either archæology or architecture alone. The poet and the painter should have their say. So, dismally contrasting in power this great fettered mover of the imagination with that free one at Gagingwell, I passed by.

A little cottage on the left hand, about three hundred yards farther on, struck me as possessing a remarkable amount of character. Geraniums, soda-water bottles, and picture postcards all gave one the impression of standing vigorously at attention. I instructed Roc to effect an introduction. He therefore walked into the house in his most engaging manner. In another moment a woman appeared. She wore a cap, and had a strong but kindly face. She seemed endowed with the solid integrity of an uncaged monolith.

"You can leave your dog here," said she.

I thanked her for her appreciation.

"Did you come to see the stones?" said she, "because I looks after them."

"I thought they looked a wild lot," said I. "I glimpsed them through their bars as I came along."

"Did you count them?" said she.

"No, I did not."

"Well, you couldn't have if you'd tried."

"Why not?"

"Nobody can count them the same twice running."

"Not even you?"

"Nobody can count them. I've been here twenty years, and counted them and counted them scores of times, and still I makes 'em different."

"Dear me," said I. "How many are there?"

"Seventy-five," said she without hesitation.

"Ah!" I said, "some one has counted them right, then."

"That's in the book," she said.

"Who put it there?" said I.

"Oh, a gentleman from the Office of Works."

"How do you know he was right?" said I.

"He was at it three weeks counting them, and he was from the Government, and it's in the book," said she.

I relented somewhat towards the railings, and we went back with the keeper of the stones and the key. She discoursed by the way of the visitors to

the circle. There were the ordinary people who came up on Midsummer's Day to see the sun rise; and there were strange unknown fraternities who stood bare-headed in the enclosure while one of their number preached a vehement sermon, "like they go on in the chapels"; and there were sun-worshippers and moon-worshippers and what not. Solitary mystics, however, she had nothing to tell of. I remember a farmer in Guernsey, on whose land stood a huge dolmen, telling me that one morning early when he went to the fields he saw a tall stranger with a great beard sitting on one of the cap-stones of the dolmen. He rose on seeing the farmer and beckoned him. When the farmer went near he poured out a strange liquid into a tiny vessel and set it on the cap-stone. Neither spoke. Presently the stranger lifted the little cup and drank of it, offering the remainder to the farmer. The latter, fascinated if not awed, partook. The host then bowed to his guest and to another not visible, and departed, never more to be seen.

"*And that*," whispered the farmer into my ear, "*was the sign*." And although he was not clear in any way what the sign was, it seemed to him a grave occasion, a momentous happening.

There was a good deal of *fas* and *nefas* about the counting business. Some stones were and some were not to be included in the computation,

which, to say the least of it, was disturbing to the calculator. My guide counted them also with due solemnity.

"Eighty-five!" I said at last.

"And I makes seventy-five!" said she with ingenuous triumph.

The Whispering Knights, a cromlech, standing some three hundred yards away, is visible from the centre of the circle through a hole in one of the circumferential stones.

"Do the fairies dance here?" I asked.

"They say that they do," she replied. "They're bound to come on the night before Midsummer's Day. But that's not right."

"Have you been to see?" said I.

"Yes, I've been twice all by myself on purpose. And I've stood here and heard all the clocks round in the two valleys strike midnight and not seen a thing."

"Ah!" said I, "but did you come before they put up the railings?"

"I can't say as I did," she replied. "Do you believe in the fairies?"

"I don't believe in the railings," said I.

"But you do believe in the counting!" she asked wistfully—there was no doubt that she did herself.

At Little Compton, adjoining a fine Tudor house, is a sweet little church with the quaintest tower imaginable. It looks as if a gable from the

house had quarrelled with its neighbours, and transferred its adornment to the church. Back once more on to a main road, we soon passed the Four Shire Stone, a rectangular pillar that marks the conflux of Gloucester, Worcester, Warwick, and Oxford. Passing such a monument gives one rather a qualm, it is so difficult to know how to appreciate it. It was not railed off, however, so I took off my hat to it. Near this spot we passed a young woman on a bicycle. In walking up a hill later on she re-passed us. But she still rode, and as she rode she read from a kind of magazine held above the handle-bars. I could not resist breaking in on her studies, and asking if she made a habit of reading while cycling. "No," she said, getting off, "only when I go up hills. Then I don't notice them."

I glanced at her journal—it was a publication of fashion plates.

"How sad," said I, "that a man has no literary equivalent whereby he could counter-act the ennui of hill-climbing."

At Moreton-on-the-Marsh, as we rode over the railway bridge, a signal clanked down, and a magnificent corridor train came in with its engine, haughty in the green and gold livery of the Great Western Railway, championing its eccentrics and fretting at the safety-valve.

"Roe," said I, "what a splendid train! Let us go along with it for a little"—and we did even to Hartlebury.

Having thus unexpectedly been wafted at Time's forelock, we proceeded leisurely to one of the smallest and most charming hamlets in England, built, as its name Hill Pool suggests, round a flagged and sedgy margin where water sleeps in the hollow of an upland. The red-brick houses, sandstone cliffs, fruit trees, and a green valley falling below all, drowsy with the sound of the Pool's overflow, is only seen from one spot, a turn in the road. It is unsuspected, suddenly beheld, and lo! the traveller is in its midst!

The native rock of Hill Pool and its neighbourhood is a red sandstone, excellent for grinding knives. Hence, in this district, scythes and hay-knives are made in great quantities. At a place called Drayton I visited one of such works. The first process is that of sandwiching a bar of steel between two bars of wrought iron. This is done by a simple welding with fire and anvil. The iron sandwich is then heated again.

Water-power, that drives all the machinery in this factory, turns a wheel that has iron studs at intervals round its rim at a dead even pace. These studs in passing operate a tilt-hammer that falls with a sharp and relentless monotony at about a hundred and thirty-five strokes to the minute. In front of this rapping tool sits a grave man on a curiously suspended chair, consisting of a wooden seat set at right

angles to an iron rod hooked to the roof some twenty feet above. To him the iron sandwich, held in locked pincers, is handed after its second heating, and he flattens and draws it out under the tilt-hammer. As he takes a glowing bar with one hand he yields up with the other a half-shaped scythe-blade, never altering his expression, never taking his gaze from the unwearying, unvarying tilt-hammer before him. Thus with the furnace glow striking through the dim reek of the shop he seems a true figure of the destiny that watches jealously over the mediocrity of men.

The next building to which I was taken was a great contrast in activities. Here was heard a great whirling of wheels, and men seated astride of wooden balks were seen to lean forward over huge, furiously revolving masses of sandstone, appearing literally to be putting their noses to the grindstone, which as a result showered sparks like catherine-wheels. In reality they were holding scythes over the stones. There is great danger attached to this work. As the large grindstones wear down, small pulleys on the transmission are replaced by larger ones, so as to compensate in speed for the reduced rim, and on occasions these stones are turned faster than their geological nature can hold, and consequently burst right under the face of the grinder.

The next process is a polish-

ing of the knives on emery wheels. After having seen this I was conducted to the packing-room. This, unexpectedly, was the most alarming business of all. A man in corduroy trousers takes a dozen scythe blades. These he bunches side by side on a bench with their gleaming edges uppermost, a fearful array of cold steel to see if nothing else were toward. He now places a single sheet of brown paper over the blades and a whisp of straw on that, and then without further precaution sits down astride of his work and commences wrapping it into a package with twisted straw rope.

I left Hill Pool at six o'clock in the evening, unaccompanied by my good companion, Roc taking the rail and travelling independent to our destination. Through carpet-yielding Kidderminster I passed on to the highroad for Bridgnorth. The milestones between these two places express themselves with the licence of poetic economy, reading "Kid" on one face and "Brid" on the other. As twilight fell the moon, with a full and friendly face, rolled up, and the wind died away as if fearing to disturb the tender dusk that lay upon the land like bloom upon a purple grape. To one who is going to travel the night through, the moon stands in a peculiar personal relationship not felt by bedward-going folk. To them, I thought, as I looked at it, it would be merely "the moon," to me it was "my moon";

together we should travel westward through deserted ways, while men ceased from the powers of thought and movement.

Over the stately Severn I rode into Bridgnorth. The town stands up on a hill. In the gloaming it wore the aspect of a city of romance rising from the dark river bank, with here and there a lighted window; houses upon houses, irregular in line of roof and front, many half-timbered and bowed with age; and on the hill-crest against the smoulder of the sunset, towers and a dome and cross.

The moon, although she promised fair at her rising, was destined to lend me the company of her light rather than her visage, for clouds soon drifted between us. Along the road I watched the gradual tendency of lights to disappear from the ground-floor and to show in the upper storeys, till they ceased altogether from the former and finally from the latter, and the houses were dark and silent. The strangeness of night possessed the road, and normal workaday values were changed. Suddenly at one place a fearful bird hovered above me, huge as the *Roc* of Arabian fable, stirring in me an involuntary qualm of the hobgoblin kingdom. Yet it was but a great fantailed grotesque cut in a high yew hedge looming between me and the sky. When I rode into Much Wenlock it was well past the midnight

hour. This town had all the appearance and feeling of a French town during the war that had been deserted. I got off my bicycle, and my footsteps rang hollowly on the road with a clatter of echoes. It seemed impossible to believe that in a few hours everyday life would be going on here as if nothing had happened. It was some time before even a friendly snore reached my ears. At a cross-roads a clock ticked with restrained ferocity. I am sure that in the daytime it does not behave like that. It was hard to entertain the reflection that this state of things is repeated for several hours out of every twenty-four. My map was on a very small scale. The choice of ways out of this place without any indication as to where they led to seemed manifold. I resigned myself to losing my way, and lost it at leisure. The spirit of mysticism enveloped me. I mounted my bicycle again, and silently zigzagged about the town before continuing my journey. Only in one place did I hear the sound of a human voice, and there I dismounted to eavesdrop for a moment. Two voices were at work—one of language in the mouth of a woman, the other of laughter, presumably of a merry little boy.

"My word!" said the voice, "I'll give it you if you don't shut up." Whereon a peal of merriment.

"You'll catch it, I tell you." (Loud derision.)

"If you don't keep quiet, I'll give you a clip on the ear—ole—my word I will." (Laughter louder than ever.)

Gruff male voice, "Shut up the both of you!" (Complete silence established.)

Taking the wrong road out of Much Wenlock, I presently corrected my error by means of my bicycle lamp and a sign-board. The byway through which I hoped to get on to the grand route for Shrewsbury seemed to lead through a pleasant countryside. In places it smelt strong of garlic; in others it was lit by innumerable glow-worms that shone with the brightness of stars. On my right, in the clouded moonlight, I discerned the ghostly form of the Wrekin, and I dismounted and sat on a gate to enjoy a sight of this hill that I might never again have under similar circumstances. I have noticed that the pleasure of a view is inevitably connected with the mood of the mind that sees it. And now, although there was hardly anything to be seen but a dim uncertain bluff, my frame of mind was the happiest, and so my enjoyment of the Wrekin was intense.

I soon got on to the great tarred road. Its surface was so dark as hardly to reflect any gleam from my weak little oil-lamp. But by night there was enjoyment to be had out of this kind of highway—an athletic thrill of pedalling till the spokes hummed and made a musical chord with the æolian

telegraph wires. Into Shrewsbury I went by the English Bridge, and out again by the Welsh one, and made good speed for the Border. In the dim dawn-light I saw the sharp pyramids of Breidon Hill and Moel y Golfa—Wales was in view! The hills would not cease now till they rose to the heights of Cadar Idris and Plynlimon towering above the salt sea waves.

But it was a cheerless dawn. Dismal showers of cold rain swept down from the Welsh valleys. In the full grey light men stirred abroad once more like chill facts borne in on the mind after a brief sojourn in Fairie.

For the sake of hearing the change in dialect that my wheels had effected for me during the night watches, I got off in Welshpool and inquired the time from an old fellow with a shaggy walking-stick and a rusty bowler-hat. We seemed surrounded by clocks, one of which was actually striking the hour of seven, but with true Celtic politeness my man pulled out a horn-encased watch, and having corrected it by the striking clock, told me the hour.

"Coming here on the Witsuntide?" said he, eyeing my baggage. "You starting early in the morning."

"I have been riding all night," said I.

"All night?"

"Yes."

"Not a possible," said he. Then regarding my shorts and

bare knees, "That a very cold trousers to going in the night with," he remarked.

"I have not felt them so," said I.

"And you going all the night in them?"

"Yes."

"Not a possible!" said he.

I spoke to him in Welsh. "Dewks Anwyl," he answered in that language, "I thought you were an Englishman." I told him in English that I was. "All English," I said, "without a drop of Welsh blood in my veins."

"You English and talking Welsh," said he in my own tongue. "Well, indeed, that not a possible whatever."

Beating up the long two-mile hill out of Welshpool on that happy invention the third speed, I arrived at a sign-board that on its left hand said Castell Caerlinion. At this little place I had once spent the night when walking in the winter from Herefordshire into Wales, and been well entertained. To go there now would be out of the way, but that was a consideration that had no weight in a long ride. Had I just been starting out after a night's rest and going half the distance that I proposed to myself, I should not have dreamed of deviating. But on a long ride time lost and extra mileage incurred seems to matter nothing.

In the inn-yard I encountered a spry wiry man dressed in well-cut breeches, and wearing them in the way that only

those who have had to do with some branch of sport can ever do for all the tailors in the world. He asked me where I was going. I told him, "Into the heart of the mountains behind Harlech."

"Oh, Harley," said he, putting me straight as to the English way of pronouncing that place. I ordered breakfast in half an hour, and going into a straw-loft, fell sound asleep till the meal was announced. The house had changed hands since I had stayed there before. The present landlord was some time stud-groom to Lord Powis, and from his youth up had been employed in the stables of great gentlemen. He bore an air of distinction about him when making known his will to the peasants of the village that sat as naturally on him as on any to the manner born. He was a great fisherman, moreover. The inn was full of sporting pictures; the neat and pleasant air of the harness-room pervaded it; all was clean, spick and span.

When I took to my wheels again everything wore an astonishingly different aspect. It did not seem the same place to which I had come barely an hour and a quarter ago. The night, the drab sunrise, the chilly rains, seemed uncertain events of a remote period. Now the sun shone, and the blue sky gleamed with well-fleeced clouds shepherded from the west. The green hillsides sparkled, thrush songs burst

from every tree, and in their interval was heard the low murmur of flowing waters. We were in Wales! And the bardic land in her best lyric trim was giving us welcome. Even my stern bicycle, born in Birmingham, rose to this moving occasion, and scaled incredible hills on the top gear. It was a fair day in Welshpool, and many a ribboned steed and farmer's trap, with wife and daughters all in holiday mood, we passed. The scenery here is charming. Little hills, of no great height but sudden in the ascent and wooded, enfold the winding Banwy and the many valleys of its tributaries. The river, with its dark oak-shaded pools, shelving to golden fleets and gentle cataracts, seems a paradise for trout. It flows from the bare uplands and grander hills of the Pass of Vedwen, once the stronghold of the most formidable band of outlaws that Wales has known since the Edwardian Conquest. Up to its source, except at one point, the road follows the Banwy within earshot of its many water-breaks.

I stopped to inquire the name of a brook from an old man who was trimming a privet hedge round one of the ugliest little chapels I have ever seen. Having answered my question, he inquired where I had come from.

"Near Birmingham," said I.

"Birmingham," said he. "I been hear a many people talking of that place. Somewhere near the London?"

"Somewhere near. Have you been to London?"

"No, indeed. But I been once to the Parkgate."

"What did you think of Parkgate?"

"Ow Anwyl, that a difference on this place, and not a person understand the Welsh."

"Are you married?" said I.

"Ay, indeed; and got a many childrens, but they all going to the big towns. That big towns swallowing everybody now."

"You come and pray in this chapel?" I asked.

"Ay, and make a singing."

"Why did they build it so ugly, I wonder?"

"Well, indeed," said he, after a little reflection, "God making even that one to looking beautiful."

Passing under the brow of Moel Bentyreh, a very striking hill like a vast rock elephant that can be seen for a great way off, and looks in the distance at least three times its actual height, the road continued to rise uphill. Approaching Garthbeibio, the character of the country changed completely. There were fewer woods, and the Banwy ran smoothly through flat meadowland. But after Garthbeibio this semi-pastoral scene rapidly gave place to another as I approached the pass called Bwlch-y-Fedwen. Trees ceased altogether, and then cultivation except in favoured spots. Although these hills are not clothed in heather, but in rough grass and rush, and

although their crests and flanks are not broken by rocky escarpments, they look as wild as the stories of their old outlaw denizens lead one to expect. The memory of these men still lingers in this region with a surprising freshness, and in bar parlours far removed from here their name is to this day mentioned in a hushed voice.

The Gwylltion Cochion Mawddwy, or the Wild Red Men of Mawddwy, were a mysterious people like the Doons of Exmoor, except that they were a swarthy race, and boasted no code of chivalry. They lived in the remotest and most inaccessible part of these hills, and supported themselves by making raids on all the surrounding districts. But their acts of violence became so great that some effort was at last made to get rid of them. In 1554 Lewis Owen, Baron of the Exchequer of Wales and Sheriff of Merioneth, himself headed a band of men and set out for the stronghold of the robbers. It was on Christmas Eve, and the Wild Red Men of Mawddwy were carousing round blazing fires that roasted more than one ill-gotten ox. All sections of the tribe were met, and men and women quaffed the mellow Welsh metheglin in the keen mountain air, till no doubt all vigilance was relaxed and the cold December stars danced to sounds of rollicking over the fires of the Red Banditti. Thus Baron Owen, approaching stealthily, fell on them. After the attack eighty

men were taken alive and led down into the valley, and as Christmas day dawned, were hanged on the bare trees of a little wood in the Bwlch-y-Fedwen. In that dim light, as Baron Owen stood and watched the execution, a fierce-eyed woman suddenly confronted him. Tearing open her dress at the bosom, she cried, "These yellow breasts have given suck both to the murdered and to those that shall wash their hands in your blood!"

A year after, when Baron Owen was coming from Welshpool through the Bwlch-y-Fedwen with a retinue of mounted servants, at a spot in the road within sight of the grave of those who had been hanged, now surmounted by a great heap of stones, on the other side of the valley, their way was obstructed by felled trees. As soon as the cavalcade was brought to a halt a shower of arrows fell upon them. One of them struck Owen in the face. Those of his servants that were unhurt escaped. The Baron was taken and stabbed to death, while, according to the sentence of their mother's curse, the avengers of the executed men washed their hands in the blood that flowed from their victim.

With reflections on these things in my mind, I crossed the top of the pass and rode down the gloomy defile. The clouds were much lower here than in the valley I had come up. They drew up from the sea with a lowering front, trail-

ing scarves of mist along the hill-tops. Presently I came to a little farm on the right hand. Two men were perched up in the top of a big apple-tree overhanging the road endeavouring to get at a swarm of bees that had settled in the thicket between them. I addressed a general remark to this group, asking them if they could tell me where Baron Owen had been murdered.

"Baron Owen?" said one of them. "You a relation of Baron Owen?"

"No," said I.

"Relation to the Cochion Mawddwy?"

"No."

"Are you a preacher?"

"No."

"Making some book?"

"Well, damn!" said the voice of his companion, referring not to our conversation, but to the protective operations of certain bees.

When the swarm was safely hived the first speaker accompanied me a hundred yards down the road. About twenty feet up a steep bank could be seen the remains of a more ancient way. This identical spot, marked by no special feature of either stock or stone, is called Lldiart Baron Owen (Baron Owen's Gate). Then, with that surprising vigour of narrative in which, as an artistic power, the Welsh excel any other raconteurs I have ever heard, the old man related the doings of the Wild Red Men as tradition had handed it to him. He told of the

robbers as if it had been matter of last week's news instead of three and a half centuries ago; how they lived; how they were caught; how they were hanged (now pointing across the valley to where the great stone heap still marks the grave of those executed eighty); how the curse of the woman was made to come to effect; and finally, how the last stragglers of the band were rounded up. Then in a whisper he told me of certain living who were suspected of still preserving in their veins the blood of that dark and evil race.

When I had got down to Mallwyd and was riding to Dinas Mawddwy I turned to look back up the valley. To one whose mind still dwelt on the Wild Red Men and the bloody murder of the judge, it was a shock of no small surprise to observe that the great broad bases of the hills whence I had come glowed with a living red. After a moment of astonishment I saw that the effect was caused by immense shrubberies of rhododendrons

growing wild on all the lower slopes round Dinas Mawddwy. Leaving that village on my right, I made through the hill barrier of Cadar Idris by the Bwleh-y-oer-Drws—the gap of the Chilly Door. This is much steeper, more rugged, and in its way wilder than the other. The road goes up to over a thousand feet, and there, high up, seen from the threshold of that Chilly Door, my goal appeared, the mountains of Ardudwy; Rhinog Fawr, where still the wild goat pastures; Diphwys, the arch frowner; and Llethr, in the hollow of whose lap lies the dreadful lake where Horror walks by day. There they stood, cloud topping their stormy crests and glooming them with purple shadows, while the sun danced upon the shining estuary of the Mawddach at their feet.

"The station-master is tolerable," said Roc, when I met him two hours later. "He's been feeding me on chocolate. But I liked the last guard better. He gave me a bone belonging to another dog."

THE GREAT CARRACK.

BY DAVID HANNAY.

WHEN the merchants of London were preparing the way for their first venture in the Indian Seas they made a rational proposal to the Lords of the Council, from whose good-will they looked for help to obtain a charter from Queen Elizabeth. It was that the King of Spain, then also King of Portugal, should be asked to name all those ports and territories in Eastern waters which were actually occupied by his subjects of both kingdoms, and therefore under his dominion. They promised to abstain carefully from all attempt to trade with such places unless they should first be favoured by the permission of the Catholic king. But they claimed the right to seek for commerce with all independent Asiatic peoples, of whom some were numerous, wealthy, and potent. The prudent merchants were desirous to have the law on their side. As for any prospect of a reasonable answer from Spain, they well knew that there was none. The Pope had granted the navigation and conquest of all the East Indies to the King of Portugal, and it was a certainty that he, being now also King of Spain, would enforce his exclusive right to the full extent of his power. The merchants were prepared to take the risk.

When James I. signed the peace with Spain and Portugal, neither of the High Contracting Parties made, and perhaps all things considered neither could make, a serious attempt to define their respective rights in the Indies, whether East or West. The London merchants would go on trading. The Spaniards and Portuguese would go on trying to shut them out. James, who sought peace, would not make the pretensions of Madrid and Lisbon a *casus belli*, but he would just as little renounce the rights of his subjects to trade with all who would trade with them. He forbade them to attack, but allowed them to defend themselves. Hence arose the condition of war in eastern seas, which permitted of such an incident as the destruction of the great carrack in the Mozambique Channel in August 1616.

It was a typical event—the neatest leading case in a long struggle between resolution on the one side and contumacy on the other. The men engaged were of the best their peoples could produce. That it was not an occasion on which the English were there and then attacked does not spoil it as an example. The Portuguese tried to exclude us everywhere. Therefore,

wherever they were met they were potentially in the attitude of assailants. How and where shall we draw the line between attack and defence?

"It happeneth," so Fuller tells us with his customary essential good sense and felicity of phrase, "in all heights and heats of oppositions, as in horse races; wherein the rider, if he doth not go beyond the post, cannot come to the post so as to win the prize; for, being upon the speed, he must go beyond it that he may come to it, though afterwards he may rein and turn his horse back again to the very place of the mark. Thus men being, in the heat of contest, upon the career of their souls, because of their passions cannot stop short at the very mark they aim at, but some extravagancies must be indulged to human infirmity, which in their reduced thoughts they will correct and amend."

The time came when the reduced thoughts of English and Portuguese in the Indian Seas allowed them to live in peace, but it was a goodish way off in 1616.

It was on 3rd February that the Company's fleet which was to destroy the great carrack dropped down from Gravesend to Tilbury Hope. If you adhere to old style of the English, who counted the year from Lady Day, 25th March, then the voyage began in 1615, but by new style, which starts from 1st January, in 1616. Head winds kept the ships at the Downs for days. On 9th

March they sighted the *Lizard*, "and that day, for that time, took our last sight of our country." Six vessels formed the fleet, but we may ignore two little ones—the *Swan* and *Rose*—which for reasons it would be a tedious superfluity to record, fell out in the course of navigation. The four which kept together and did the feat in company were the *Charles*, a fine new ship of 1000 tons, "well furnished with small arms and cannon round about"; the *James* and the *Unicorn*, big ships too; and the small *Globe*. The *Charles* was "the admiral," by which they meant in those days the flag-ship, and she, of course, carried the "general," who was the commander-in-chief, Captain Benjamin Joseph. Mr Foster, in his 'Letters received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East' (for which he has the best of right to our respect and gratitude), lays it down in a note that Joseph's name shows that he must have been of Jewish extraction. One wonders why. Was Henry Jacob, the Nonconformist of that day, and son of a Kentish yeoman, a Jew? Or the Company's factor, Cassarian David? Christians had been taking names out of the Scriptures for centuries. We know that Benjamin Joseph was an elderly man, and had seen much service at sea in the old days of privateering against Spain. We may guess without much risk of going wrong that he had come into the service of the East India Company from the

Levant Company, together with many of its "committees," "governors," "captains and cape merchants," sailing-masters and factors. He is visible as in a glass darkly till just at the end, but even so as a precise and resolute man.

There were two others in the "admiral" who cannot be ignored. The one was Edward Connock, the Company's chief factor, who played his part here and was to play a greater in Persia—an oddish man, clever, zealous, "an undertaking fellow," as the old phrase has it, not without a good dose of vanity of the peacock kind, which is better than the gander type. Then there was Edward Terry, preacher, historian of the voyage, and of much else—a man with seeing eyes, and a dash of Fuller in his style. Beyond them there is no need to name more than Alexander Childe, captain of the *James*, the second big ship; and Henry Pepwell, captain of the *Unicorn*, the third big ship, and "vice-admiral" of the fleet. Whether any of the three—Joseph, Childe, or Pepwell—were men bred to the sea, "regular bred seamen," sailormen, must remain doubtful. The custom of old was that a king's ship, or one of the Company's, or a fleet belonging to either, was put under the command of a man who by virtue of his education, and the confidence due to his knowledge and character, was judged to be fit to direct. The technical or professional part of the work of navigation

and seamanship was left to the sailing-master, who for his part would be a man bred to the sea. No doubt "gentleman" captains, cape (*i.e.*, head) merchants, and factors might, and did, win a useful practical knowledge of seamanship in long voyages. In moments of stress, and when scurvy or the country fevers had swept away a large part of a crew—and that was common enough—then the gentlemen had to haul with the sailors, to go into the tops, to put their hands to the pumps. Even the Portuguese *fidalgos*, who stood much on their dignity, could work like utter plebeians when they were all under pressure of the same deadly peril. Readers of 'Maga' do not need to be reminded of what Edie Ochiltree said to the Baronet when they were clinging to the face of the cliff. So because they lived the same life, and fought the same dangers, factors and sailors, the trading element and the sailormen, were worked into one another. It is not possible to draw a line to show where the factor ended and the sailor began. About 1616 the Company was beginning to realise that its early practice of leaving the same "general" to sail the fleet and rule the factory would not do. It was very cautiously beginning to specialise the "trade" and the "marine cases"—but so far had not got beyond the first stage.

On 28th March they sighted that "overgrown rise of earth," the Peak of Teneriffe. Mr

Terry had no better eyes for the romantic in nature than the rest of his generation. General Benjamin Joseph, or the sailing-master whom he trusted, did not know better than to steer east of south from the Canaries. Of course that brought him into the belt of calms, head-winds, "tourna-does" the sailors called them, and contrary currents on the coast of Africa. "Satan, that prince of the air (who is most tyrannical where he is most obeyed), seems to rule more here than he doth in other parts," says Mr Terry. Not till 12th June did they reach the Agoada—i.e., the watering-place—of Saldanha, which we now call Table Bay. The Saldanha Bay of our maps had then no name. Here they traded or tried to trade for "Boos" and "Baas" with the natives. By this time the Hottentots had realised that they could sell "Boos," which are cattle, and "Baas," which are sheep, for more than a handful of nails. The provision trade at Saldanha had been spoiled. They found a poor little Portuguese vessel which was to have carried emigrants to Angola lying here. She had been pillaged and turned adrift by the Dutch, who had robbed even the women of nearly all their clothes. Mr Terry grows jocular in a rather nasty way in this passage.

General Joseph landed a Hottentot who had been brought to England by a homeward Indian, and instructed in civilisation in the household of

the governor, Sir Thomas Smith. They called him Cooree, and sent him back with a suit of brass armour to impress his countrymen. The first thing he did was to get rid of these trappings, and he was seen capering about joyfully in his native nakedness. Joseph also landed three condemned felons who had been sent out to be left at the Cape, in the expectation that they would pick up the language and make themselves useful as interpreters in future. The poor wretches went down on their knees to him not to land them, but he obeyed his orders. One is glad to know that they were taken off by another ship. This was no new action on the part of the Company, which followed herein the example of the Portuguese. When Sir Thomas Roe sailed in the previous year, he carried ten condemned criminals to be left at Saldanha. He had charitably taken two of them with him to India, and one of them repaid the kindness by stealing his plate. Among the eight who were left was one Cross, a former yeoman of the Guard, who had been condemned to death because he had had a hand in matters of blood. Cross, who was a very big man, imposed himself on the rascals who were marooned with him, and began oppressing the natives. The Hottentots laid an ambush for him and killed him with their assegays. A homeward-bound ship picked up the others. They gave infinite trouble on the way,

and within twenty-four hours after they had landed in England, four of them had committed a highway robbery. They were caught, and hanged on their old sentence. Such was the indomitable spirit of Englishmen gone to the bad.

While the Company's fleet was on its way three carracks had sailed from Lisbon for India. One sprung a leak and returned. The others were separated by bad weather on the coast of Guinea, and one of them reached Goa in safety. The third was to be the victim of Joseph's squadron. As the Portuguese had learnt to hold well out to the west when south of the Canaries, so as to avoid the head-winds and currents on the African coast, and as they habitually gave the Cape a wide berth, there was little risk of a meeting with the English till both had entered the Mozambique Channel, the Portuguese bound for Goa and the coast of Malabar, the English for Surat and the Gulf of Cambaya. On the 6th of August the two were standing to the north in the southerly monsoon, and the Portuguese was ahead. Pepwell gives the position of the English ships as 13° 26' S., just south of the Comoro Islands, which lie between the north end of Madagascar and Mozambique. They saw her light before day-break, and when she was sighted she was hull down ahead. Pepwell says that her distance was four leagues off. The captain was writing to his employers about more than the action with the carrack,

and is brief. Mr Terry, who tells the story in his 'Travels,' goes into detail, and makes observations of a rather surprising character even at that date, considering that he was a Christ Church man and a Master of Arts.

"At first she appeared as if there had been some great hill interposed betwixt us, for first we had sight only of her colours in her high maintop, after this of her masts and sails, and then of her hull [we observe that the carrack had carried her light and had then hoisted her colours at the main top-gallant head, not as was the custom of later days at the stern], after which manner ships at sea do everywhere appear at great distance one to another; which proves that that mighty collection of waters called seas have a convex or globous and round body, placed by Almighty God, as it were in hills, or heaps, and being above the earth, and higher than it, they having set limits, and commanded they are to their bounds, contrary to their nature, which they may not pass (see the 104th Psalm, verse 9: 'Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth'). But this is known to all that have been at sea, therefore we proceed."

They were still in the Middle Ages at Christ Church when Mr Terry proceeded Master of Arts in 1614. Whether or no he believed that the earth was flat, he was firmly con-

vinced that the sea rose from the shore, and was all hills and peaks, kept in place by divine order quite contrary to nature. So had many thought before, and they had the testimony of their eyes to teach them. If the high main top-gallant mast of a ship rises above the horizon as the top of a steeple pierces above a hill, the identity of the appearances is easily explained. The sea is obviously arranged in hills. It is known to all who have been at sea, therefore let us have no meddling with new-fangled notions but proceed.

When the big Portuguese was seen there was eager preparation in the Company's fleet—a clearing for action, hoisting out of boats from the booms to be towed alongside, a bringing up and mounting of guns which had been struck down on the way out, to leave room for provisions stowed between decks. Captain Childe of the *James* reports that he was taking these precautions between the first and second phases of the coming encounter. The small *Globe*, the quickest sailer of the fleet, was sent ahead to hail the stranger, while the *Charles* and *James* came on behind her, and the *Unicorn*, for she was a slug, lagged behind. It was not till between two and three in the afternoon that the *Globe* was within hailing distance of the carrack. When the questions, Who are you? and Where do you come from? were shouted, the Portuguese answer, so Mr Terry learnt, was "From the

sea," and a volley first of abuse and then of cannon-shot, which damaged the *Globe* in hull and spars. She was a small craft, and could but sheer off, leaving room for the *Charles* to range up to windward of the carrack, and hail her also. There was only a pistol-shot, say, forty yards, between them.

After what had passed, the natural consequence, one cannot but suppose, would have been an instant exchange of broadsides. But the case was not so simple as it may well look. The Company's ships could lawfully defend themselves when attacked, but they had strict orders not to attack. Now it was a matter for serious reflection to Captain Benjamin Joseph that he must not play the assailant in a too unqualified way. If he did he could rely without imprudence on being able to overpower the carrack. He had three capital ships against one, and experience had taught him that his broadside was almost certainly the heavier, and his gunnery better. But then the ambassador of King Philip III. might make trouble in London, and the King might take a serious view of what the Company's captains had been doing. And if he made that reflection he was well advised. When, a few years later, the Company's servants in the East helped Shah Abbas of Persia to drive the Portuguese from Ormuz, their masters had to pay heavily for the adventure. The king came

down on them for the droits of Admiralty on their prize money. When they replied that there was no war and therefore could be no droits, they were told that if what their captains had been doing was not war, it was piracy, and that here was a case for Admiralty Sessions at the Old Bailey. The Company had to pay heavily to the king, and also to his Lord High Admiral, Buckingham. Joseph was careful to put the law on his side, and manifestly tried to provoke the Portuguese to fire first at him personally. He would probably have been content to extort an apology and frighten the Portuguese into paying blackmail for leave to continue their voyage. The Company's men did that on other occasions. And they might have done so now if they had not had to deal with Dom Manoel de Meneses.

Fortune, that useful name for the something, not ourselves, which lays our course for us, had provided that the masters of the East who were going should be shown in the most perfect contrast to their successors who were coming, when it arranged so as to bring Meneses face to face with Joseph, Pepwell, and the others. He was an old soldier who had seen much service in India, and was now on his way out to take command of all the Portuguese troops at, or dependent on, Goa. He represented the higher authorities in the carrack, but had under his general direction a sea

captain, Capitao da Mar, or sailing-master. Capitao da Guerra, fighting captain, would be his own position. Meneses was not one of those trading "fidalgos" to whom the king had granted the lucrative privilege of a voyage, and who made as much money as they could, even by overloading their ships. He was all soldier, all fidalgo in the best sense of the name, one who saw, and wished to see, the point of honour and nothing else. 'The Tales of Chivalry,' which had doubtless been his reading in youth, had taught him that a gentleman may be killed with credit, but that he cannot be overcome till he yields.

When the *Charles* ranged up to windward of the carrack there followed an exchange of provocations, not unlike another to be read of in the first scene of the first act of 'Romeo and Juliet.'

SAMPSON. "Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it."

ABRAHAM. "Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

SAMPSON. "I do bite my thumb, sir."

And so on till the swords begin talking. The *James*, the best sailer of our capital ships, was alongside the Portuguese before the *Charles*, but Captain Childe left his superior officer to speak. And Joseph was fixed to have the law on his side. Connock, the chief factor, did not approve of this interference with the Portuguese. No love was lost be-

tween the "general" and the factor. Joseph thought and said that the Company's trading representative was inclined to take too much on himself where "sea cases" were the matter in hand. But he had to think of the report which Connock might make to the governor and committees of the Company. To get the law on his side he hailed the carrack, and summoned her captain to come aboard the *Charles*, and explain his action in firing on the *Globe*. Meneses, speaking by the mouth of his sailing-master, replied that he had no boat out. The English might send one if they chose. One was sent, and she brought back a Portuguese officer, apparently the sailing-master, and two minor officials. Mr Terry, who by the way makes a fine confusion between the "captains" of the carrack, says that the poor Portuguese trembled when they saw the broadside of the *Charles*. Faria y Souza, the Portuguese historian, allows that when the messenger returned he reported that any one of the English ships was stronger than their own. Meneses took him aside and wiggled him severely for talking in such a way as to discourage the crew. The sailing-master brought a letter with him from Joseph. In it the English general summoned the Portuguese commander to "repair aboard to make him amends for the wrong he had done, or else at his peril to abide what might ensue." Dom Manoel had counted the cost.

He ordered the English "shallop" to come under his stern, and then, standing on the gallery, he replied, in the style of an Amadis, or an Esplandian, that he commanded his ship for the king; that he "was not to go out of it at any man's pleasure or command before he arrived at Goa; and that if other satisfaction were demanded it must be gained by the sword." When this answer was brought back, Joseph had the fair plea he sought. He had been round his quarters, and had seen that all was in order. The *Charles* opened fire.

With two English ships in position to fire into the carrack, and each her equal, or more than her equal, it would seem that the action must be soon over. But it was to last to the third day. At the very beginning of the fight Benjamin Joseph was struck full in the chest by a cannon shot, and shattered, hurled, no doubt, against the bulwarks. In a disciplined fighting ship manned by an organised "military" crew the fall of the "general" would only have transferred the command to the next in rank. But the *Charles* was an armed trader, and ranks were not exactly fixed throughout; there was a doubt as who among the senior men was to follow Joseph in case of his death. They could not know till they had opened the Company's sealed orders. Connock, who claimed to be the next in succession, was averse to meddling with

the Portuguese at all. Therefore it was that Captain Henry Pepwell, lumbering out of range astern in the heavy sailing *Unicorn*, was surprised to see the *Charles* and *James* sheer off, and allow the carrack to stand on. She did, and—it was now just about sundown in that latitude—she anchored close to Mohilia, the south-westerly island of the Comoros. The English anchored too, but not near. They did not know the coast, and were better seamen than to risk grounding on a shoal by reckless navigation. All through the hours of darkness the lantern blazed again at the main top-gallant mast-head of the carrack. Dom Manoel, like the Amadis of Gaul he was, had run it up as a challenge to all comers.

There was a council in the great cabin of the *Charles*, held in the presence of the mangled body of Captain Benjamin Joseph, which had been laid on the table. Box 1 of their “worships’ instructions” was opened, and it was found that they, the Governor and the Company, had appointed Henry Pepwell to succeed—“which,” so Pepwell records in his report, and we will take his word for it, for he was a gallant man, “was no sooner read and made known but Mr Connocke (*sic*) propounded to have His Majesty’s commission openly read, making a question whether I might offer any further force against the carrack. I answered that this his suggestion was unbecoming and out of season, our

late general’s body torn in pieces at that time bleeding before our eyes, challenging me to revenge his death, which I then made promise to do or else to die therefor; and that, as in his lifetime myself was never curious or inquisitive of more than he would freely impart unto me nor never gainsaid his commands [*you know what I mean, Mr Connocke*], so was I confident he would not attempt anything that was not justifiable; upon assured trust whereof I would prosecute our just revenge, which being performed I should have then sufficient leisure to peruse and examine His Majesty’s commission, which the rest of the consultation approving, he ceased further opposition.”

These are the words, the very words, fixed on paper by himself of a company’s captain. No very exceptional man, but one of many in the seventeenth century. They can stand beside the piece of Elizabethan eloquence which Kingsley put into the mouth of Amyas Leigh to be spoken over the body of Salvation Yeo, and they will not lose colour. Our fathers wrote English, and from the heart. We know only the end of Benjamin Joseph, but are told enough of that to leave us sure of one thing. He must have been a man who could grapple others to him by hooks of steel. There is a fine ring of admiring loyalty in Pepwell’s avowal of faith in his old commander, and then we have another who also believed. He is given

us by Mr Terry. Among the followers of the dead general, was one of the name of Raven. This man came to the chaplain in the dawn of the day when the fight was renewed, and said that he wished still to follow his own leader. "I would I were with him wherever he is," was the substance of his words. Mr Terry was shocked. Was there not presumption in Raven's wish, even a tempting of God, and an impatience ill becoming in a Christian man, who ought to wait for his summons? He did not know or had forgotten that Jerome of Prague, for whom Mr Terry had no doubt great respect, had said as much of Wickliff; and he records with the air of one noting judgment that Raven had his will, for his head was carried off when the action was renewed.

The fighting was delayed till a day had passed. The wind fell to a dead calm, and sailing ships are slaves of the wind. They also must obey the current. Now a strong current runs to the south through the Mozambique Channel. Without a good breeze from southward they could not stem it, and would have been carried back if they had got up anchor. Neither Portuguese nor English could wish to have that happen to them. They were well on in the season, and there was a risk that if the calm lasted they might be carried so far down that they would not be able to work up to the

latitude of Socotra before the change of the monsoon. If they were too late they might have to wait till next year before making the coast of Malabar or the Gulf of Cambaya. So they swung at their anchors, resolved to lose nothing since they could not gain. Late in the afternoon a breeze began to get up from the land. The carrack weighed her anchor and stood out first. For a time she alone had the wind, and she began to lead ahead just before dark. As the English continued to be becalmed, Dom Manoel was ahead when night fell, though the monsoon had begun to blow again from south-east, and the Company's fleet could now follow. They had no difficulty in keeping him in sight, for the indomitable Meneses ran his lantern up again when darkness came down. Nothing in common-sense, nor in honour sanely looked at, made it incumbent on him to flare defiance. A British naval officer of the days of Nelson and the Nile, outnumbered hopelessly, would have thought it a pure folly, and would indeed have been told by a court-martial that he had behaved like a fool if he had not put all lights out and altered his course. But then Meneses was a "fidalgo," who was unmanageable on the point of honour. He kept his light burning at the high mast-top as a challenge, and the English followed him. Mr Terry, keeping his eyes about him, thought he observed a more chastened

spirit in the men of the *Charles* than had been visible among them when they went to prayer on the 6th. They had had "a cooling card," as the age called a rap over the knuckles, and not all of them were of one mind with Raven.

Just before daybreak on the 8th prayers were read. The Company, though loyal to its protector the king, had puritanical leanings, but the English Church service would be used, "when," says Mr Terry, "I observed more seeming devotion in our seamen that morning than at any time before or after," while I kept them company. Who for the generality are such a kind of people that nothing will bow them to bring them to their knees but extreme hazards." At evening prayers on the day before he had exhorted, as became his office, but was "outrhetoricked" by Pepwell, who held forth briefly: "My masters, I have never a speech to make unto you, but to speak to the cooper to give every one of you a good cup of sack, and so God bless you." Mr Terry had to confess that the new general's address was better appreciated than his own. There had been a third service on the day before the end, when they buried their dead general in the coffin hastily made by the ship's carpenter, lowering him into the sea without salute, lest they should gratify the enemy by giving him notice of their loss.

The sun rose "in a red mantle," and the carrack was still leading. The day was wearing on before the hunters could bring the stag to bay. It was Pepwell's part to be the first in action, but the *James* sailed better than the *Charles*, and he hailed her to go ahead. They would have said in later days that he ordered a general chase, each ship going at her best speed. The *James* got first into action, and then the *Charles*. From the context it would appear that they engaged her both on the same side—the *James* on the bow, and the *Charles* on the quarter, where her heaviest guns were. They found enough to do. The gunnery of the Portuguese was good, far better than we had ever known it. They seldom missed either hull or spars. Given the erratic nature of gun-fire at the time, this was wonderful good practice, even at short range. The duel lasted so long that Pepwell's gunner told him that the guns were becoming overheated. Very unwillingly he drew off for a spell, and then came up again. The heavy *Unicorn* and the little *Globe*, though a part was assigned them, could take no notable share in the fight. Pepwell was burning to be well to the front, if only "to give a testimony how injuriously and falsely I had been scandalised formerly to your Worships." What his reference means is that he had been accused of an intention to join Sir John

Fern, one of Raleigh's captains, in an interloping voyage to the East under a commission from Henri IV. Fern was then engaged in Sir Walter's last expedition to Guiana. Pepwell's resolution to show his zeal was grimly tested a few moments after he resumed his station on the quarter of the carrack. A shot from the Portuguese struck one of the guns on the quarter-deck, and it flew into pieces. The splinters were driven across the deck. One tore the brawn from one of the arms of Richard Hounsell, the sailing-master. No less than four smote Pepwell. His left eye was cut out so that it hung in strips down his cheek. His jaw—mandible he calls it—and nose were cut open by two others, and a fourth drove into his left leg, forcing its way between the bones. The agony of this last hurt was intolerable, and he fainted. They thought he was killed—and indeed, insensible as he was, with his head covered by blood, he must have looked like a dead man. So they lifted him and took him to the great cabin where the torn body of Joseph had lain but a few hours earlier. "What followed in each particular I leave to others to write," he says. For himself, being "astonished," he knows nothing; and when he recovered his senses could only prepare himself for God, being "not so unwilling to leave this world (wherein I seldom found any content) as that I

sorrowed in not accomplishing my resolute determination to have boarded the carrack."

This time the fall of the commander did not bring a suspension of the engagement. The first mate took the place both of Pepwell and of the sailing-master, and they fought on. The odds were too long against the Portuguese. His spars began to fall. At about three in the afternoon his mainmast came down. The southerly wind had now carried all the vessels close to the shore of Angaziya—the Great Comoro. The Portuguese was between the English ships and the land, and was drifting to the beach. If she struck she would become a total wreck, and would be lost to her captors. So a boat was sent with a summons to surrender, very politely worded and highly complimentary to the valour of her crew. And now Mr Connock the irrepressible came again to the fore, "bearing himself most insolently, to the general offence of the whole fleet." He asserted that the command now rested with him, and positively refused to allow Mr Methwold, another factor, whose name is often met at the time, to accompany him, for he and no other was to carry the message. Pepwell, weak from loss of blood and distracted by pain, which must have been acute, could not control the self-assertive head factor. Nobody could, not even Sir Thomas Roe, the Ambassador, who represented both king

and Company. So the unruly man went in the shallop and boarded the dismasted carrack as she drifted towards the rocks. The fact that he had served the Levant Company in Syria, and had more languages than any one else in the fleet, perhaps goes a good way to explain why he was employed. The conference was held between the English factor and the Portuguese sailing-master in Italian, by which we ought perhaps to understand the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean and Peninsular sailors. The sailing-master, who is reported to have shown "manifest tokens of great fear," would have yielded, so all men thought. But "a personage of grave aspect sitting by clothed in black," to whom he kept referring, would not hear of the proposal. He only smiled disdainfully, and said "Boina." Offers of "fair war" and respectful usage were wasted on the personage of grave aspect, who was in fact Dom Manoel de Meneses. Mr Terry and Captain Childe of the *James*, whose narrative is in Purchas, agree that he went further than merely saying "Boina," which is "good," and in that connection was a contemptuous "Pooh." He told Connock that he would go to sea again if he possibly could, and fight once more, "and then if fire or sword forced him he might unhappily be taken, but he would never yield; and if we took him

alive he hoped to find the respect of a gentleman." The words were spoken while the carrack was still drifting landwards. Soon she struck heavily, and was fixed between two rocks. During the night she was set on fire, of course by the orders of Meneses, and burnt down to the water. It was a disaster, but Dom Manoel could claim that the honour of Portugal had suffered no diminution at his hands. His adventures ashore do not belong to this story, and must remain untold. One is glad to know that he did reach Goa with the survivors of the fight and the wreck, sailing in native craft, and was received with the respect he deserved. The English ships went on to Surat with an enhanced estimate of the fighting spirit of some at any rate of the Portuguese. They tried to persuade themselves that the carrack's gunners were English or Dutch, which would account for the excellence of their practice. In the then lawless Eastern Seas it was not incredible that Englishmen or Dutchmen should have fought against their own religion and race. Or perchance they were Roman Catholics. The probability is that the carrack's gunners were just Portuguese better trained than usual.

Pepwell survived his wounds, but died fourteen months after the fight with the carrack, when he was about to sail for home.

A RED TUNIC.

BY JOHN EYTON.

I.

In the year 1860 Her Majesty's 99th Regiment of Foot made a forced march from Mhow, in the centre of India, to Nasik in the west. The occasion of their hurry has long been forgotten; actually it was the threat of a religious rising in that most secretive city of the Hindus—Nasik of the many temples, mysterious as the river which mirrors them.

It was a long journey for hot days—full two hundred and fifty miles, up and down,—and a beaten road did not always serve them. Rivers—the Nerbadda and the Tapti—had to be crossed in rafts; high hills, Vindhya and Satpuras, had to be climbed; but the greater part of their long way led through jungle of thorn and bare tree and golden grass, and they rarely escaped the sun.

So for many days the regiment trailed like a long red snake over the land. Dust grimed their faces, and sun burnt them to the colour of their coats. For covering they had but peaked caps, with a handkerchief for the neck, soaked in water but soon dry. Lacking transport, they were heavily equipped, but they marched solid. Only the tail of the long column was diverse

and patchy, where walked the rag-tag regiment of mule-men and bullock-drivers, cooks and water-carriers, dhoolie-bearers and coolies, bearing colours of their own—red, yellow, pink, green puggarees—to brighten brown bodies. Here and there a redcoat limped among them, or staggered on his way to catch up with his company; for many fell out from heat-stroke, and some stayed behind.

It was at one of the last stages of the march that young Keen, with a clatter of his rifle and a dull thud of his body, dropped in the dust. They were climbing the Satpuras, and had just reached the highest point of the road. Another moment and the command to halt might have given him time for recovery. As it was, his face turned from brick-red to dead white, and he fell like a log. He was a mere boy, the youngest of his company, with a broad face under a thatch of red hair, and blue eyes. There was little to be done for him in a halt of half an hour, and they had to lay him by the side of the road, and leave him to be picked up later by a sergeant's relief party. As they marched on, a beastie fell out of the stream of followers, and splashed a

little water from his mussack on his upturned face, but the limp body never stirred. Soon, in a drift of dust, the regiment had passed on. And the sun went down.

II.

Young Keen never knew how long he lay by the roadside, or what happened to him during his period of unconsciousness. He awoke as from sleep, suddenly conscious that he lived, though the part of him that lived seemed utterly crushed under some dull dead weight that pressed his head. For a long time he lay drowsy. His first knowledge of anything outside himself came through sound—a little regular tapping sound, beating monotonously at his ears,—and this sound he used, as it were, for his hold on consciousness. He stirred, and opened his eyes.

It was very dark, but there were two points of yellow light above him. He was lying on the ground, then. He felt the ground, which was wet and cold. A drop of water splashed on his hand, and he suddenly understood the sound he had heard—water dripping. The knowledge of this one fact brought him completely back to life. He realised that he was lying on the floor of a dark room, lit with two candles which burned at the feet of something red—something red as his own tunic—and high. His eyes travelled upwards; then, with a shock of fear, he

sat upright. Great round blue eyes were looking into his, and they never wavered; the sound of his own cry came back to him from a distance, ludicrously small. Then, mercifully, he heard a footfall outside, and a door was opened, letting in a flood of sunlight. Some one came in.

Light revealed everything. Standing over him was a brown youth with a lean body and very thin legs, whose ribs showed above a brown loin-cloth; he had a pinched aquiline face, and brooding dark eyes. He was raising his hands, palms inwards, to his forehead. Then he knelt, facing Keen, and again so raised his hands. Behind him in the shadow loomed a monstrous scarlet image, with saucer eyes.

"Gawd!" said Keen, relieved of some of his fear, since he could see that the thing was carven. Then, pointing to the monster, he said, "What's that?"

The youth again made a gesture of reverence, and Keen realised his meaning.

"Oh, it's a *pooja*!"¹ he said. "*Pooja* hai?"

The youth nodded and smiled. Then he talked rapidly in a low

¹ *Pooja* = worship.

voice, which had a crooning kind note in it.

"Let's get out of this," said Keen; and he pointed to the door, making as if to raise himself. The youth seemed to be shy of approaching him, but as Keen struggled to move, he came behind him, and, putting his hands under his armpits, dragged him into the blinding sunlight. Then he propped him against the white wall of what Keen knew now to be a temple, where a single leafy tree made a shade, and abruptly left him.

Young Keen took stock of the situation. He must have had a "touch o' sun," like many another. But the regiment? Out of sight—gone down that winding white road. Suddenly he felt very thirsty, though he did not realise that he had slept for eighteen hours.

Looking round for water, he saw that he was in a beautiful place. The little shrine wherein he had slept—Chandor is its name—was wonderfully sited. With a background of great hills, it looked down a deep ravine, dark and cool, to a picture of a promised land—a sunlit green plain, with a blue lake like a gem in the midst of it. Immediately below him, on his right, hewn black steps led down to a tiny village of thatched houses, nestled in the hillside; and on the left he saw the ribbon of a white waterfall foaming over dark rocks.

"Thank Gawd for that," said young Keen, sure of that

which would quench his thirst. Then he gazed at the scene in peace. Presently the brown youth came running round the corner, and—oh, glory!—he had a brass pot in his hand. Keen snatched it, and drained it greedily. For the moment he wanted nothing in life but endless water. At last he leant back and laid down the brass pot, grinning at his new friend.

"Panee. Achha," he remarked. The youth salaamed, again with both hands. Then he brought a shallow brass dish with a cloth over it, which he removed. There was rice in the dish and a chapatti. He put the dish by Keen's side, and darted away a yard or two, as a man might do after putting food near a wild animal. Keen fell on the food. He found the chapatti tough, but the rice was soft, with a pleasant spice in it. Soon both were gone. The guest smiled and rubbed his stomach; then, remarking "More panee," pointed vaguely from the brass pot to the waterfall on the hill. Once more he was understood, and his friend disappeared. Keen crossed his legs and leant back, soliloquising as was his wont.

"Wonder where I sleep. Might do worse than this tree. Rum, that cove. Might have cut my throat instead of fetching panee. Young for a priest—shouldn't wonder if he weren't younger'n' me."

He snuggled into a groove of the ground, and rested his head against a smooth part of

the tree-trunk. Feeling very drowsy, he droned on to himself—

“What’s my game? Give him a rupee, and clear? Or tie a towel round my waist, and do pooja to a ruddy—Indoo—gawd? A—ah!”

Young Keen was asleep. As the sun set, and made the plain beyond the black hills all golden, the youth came and stood over him, gazing down. He had a rough hair blanket, coloured brown, over one arm,

and in his hands the brass pot and a little bunch of flowers. Gently he spread the blanket over the sleeper, and laid the pot and the flowers by his side. Then he squatted on his heels at Keen’s feet, nursing his knees and watching. Now and then he seemed to pray.

The breeze came down from the hill-tops, and he hugged himself closer, and shivered. Then came the dark, and hid them both.

III.

Keen was three days with his friend in need at Chandor. The situation was extraordinary, since, without a word of mutual language, they came to understand one another perfectly. It was a lonely silent place, and they never saw another soul. The village below was deserted, cholera having killed three-quarters of the inhabitants and frightened the rest. The youth’s father—a lesser priest of the wild—had so died, and left his son in charge of the temple, to live on the little store of provision found in the village granaries, and on the alms of wayfarers.

All this Keen actually learned by signs and gestures. He learned too his friend’s name—Chandra—and gave his own, Bill Keen. So a friendship grew up between them—if gratitude on the one part and hero-worship on the other may be so called. For Keen found

himself a hero, followed at all times by those brooding brown eyes that had got a dog-like faithful look in them. The salaams he deprecated. “I don’t want no pooja,” he said on more than one occasion; but secretly he liked the new sensation, though he never came near to understanding the cause of it.

The cause was simply this. Chandra had all his life worshipped and watched a red god. From his father he had learned the lore, and reincarnation was to him no mere legend surviving from the Vedas: it was a living creed. He knew that the great gods came back.

As it chanced, he had been in the village when the regiment passed, so that he could not know that the world contained many hundred beings with fair faces and red garments. Only at dusk on his return he had found, stretched

out as in death, a being with the blue eyes of his god, the redness of his god, near the temple of his god. He had immediately prostrated himself before the unconscious Keen, feeling himself blessed among men, and had eventually dragged him into his rightful resting-place, as he considered it. He had rejoiced at his awakening as at a completed miracle, and had offered him food and drink and flowers ere he had watched night-long over his sleep.

He honestly believed Keen god revealed as man—Vishnu reincarnate. Those who doubt may reflect that he had never before set eyes on a white man.

The god had spoken, and, little by little making his shy approach, Chandra had dared to walk and talk with God. Because he was young, he was more shy than afraid; but on a word of anger from Keen he would have crawled away from his presence, or at a command would have burned his flesh with fire, unflinching. When Keen, as he sometimes did, laid his hand on his shoulder and called him "old friend," he could have wept for sheer joy, though he did not understand the words. Once he touched one of Keen's bright buttons with his finger, marvelling. Keen only thought that his friend admired his tunic inordinately—the one glimpse, incidentally, that he had of the truth.

The odds on the destruction of the illusion were enormous.

If the sergeant's party, which eventually came to pick up stragglers, had found Keen by the temple instead of on the road, it must have been shattered. Even ten fair men in red garments would have been too much for Chandra's faith. But a slender chance did preserve the dream.

The end came thus. Keen met the party toiling along in the dust at the top of the pass, with three men on stretchers and half a dozen limping. The sergeant ordered him to join them, but he obtained leave to say good-bye to his preserver. He was told to catch the party up at the first shady place in the road, and to look smart about it. Then he went to find Chandra.

When Keen signed that he was going away, pointing down the ravine where the road shone white, Chandra stood stock still, the tears running freely down his sunk cheeks.

"Rum," said Keen. "'Ere, old friend." He held out all the money he had. Chandra shook his head.

Then Keen had an inspiration. His coat was lying folded under the tree beside the temple. Mentally framing an excuse for the sergeant's ear, he picked it up and threw it like a mantle over the other's shoulders. Chandra fell flat on his face and kissed Keen's feet.

Bill Keen is long dead, though his children still tell of the days he spent in the wilds, hobnobbing with a brown

heathen. But the temple still stands at the head of the ravine, where Scindia sited it, and an old man serves it. He is very thin and weak, with a beard as white as the waterfall below ; for the most of the day he sleeps under the tree by the temple, and a boy brings him food and drink ; but there is still great life in his peaceful brown eyes, and they light up as he tells a jumbled tale of how once God came and abode in that place.

You will know him by the coat he wears. Its sleeves are in shreds and patches. The lining is gone, and the skirts hang in tatters. Many rains and much dust have turned it dingy purple, and stained it with streaks of brown. It has only one button left, which is quite black ; but if you look at it closely you will see the figures 99 under a royal crown. Then you will believe his tale and mine.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

UNCHANGING GERMANY—HER INDUSTRIOUS PROPAGANDA—NEWS FROM MUNICH—MR LLOYD GEORGE'S LOVE OF GERMANY—THE NECESSITY OF THE ENTENTE—MR LLOYD GEORGE, AUTHOR—A MATTER OF SIX FIGURES—WHERE IS SHAKESPEARE NOW?—LORD NORTHCLIFFE—A MASTER OF THE MACHINE.

ONCE more Germany is hypnotising the nations of the world. Before the war she told them, and they for a while believed, that the superiority of her Kultur would give her the victory. She did not explain what Kultur meant, and nobody knew; but it had a massive sound about it, and it was sufficient for the work of deception. We still remember with how fine a persistence she represented herself as before all things humane and merciful. If she massacred the Belgians, whom she had sworn to protect, she did it for their good. Louvain suffered, it is true, but it suffered because the beneficent Germans chastened those whom they loved. The very simplicity of their propaganda deluded those for whose eyes the precious documents were designed. Even though they did not understand the characters of their opponents, they made no mistake about the credulity of the human race. They knew that if they repeated their plain statements often enough, they would persuade the others to believe them. So, vaunting their own moderation, they annexed, in fancy, whatever seemed good to them on either

side the Atlantic, and thought they would quell all their enemies into subjection by the mere threat of new frontiers.

They lost the war; they drove out their ruling families; and they remain the same—arrogant and deceitful. They have not abated one jot of their ancient policy. In propaganda they are as eager and adroit as ever. They believe, and with some justice, that the written word can change the minds and purposes of men. They guide the hands of those who know not that they are the victims of an enemy's cunning. They distil their subtle poison and pour it into the ears of useful men, such as editors and politicians. They make the speeches of those who should oppose them bitterly, and who in the moment of subservience still believe that they are using their own words to express their own thoughts. They have employed their great gifts of organisation to drill their nation until it has become a living, walking argument. They don the sackcloth, besprinkle their heads with ashes, and demand commiseration. They who a few years since made war upon Europe now come, *in formâ pauperis*,

to plead for kindly treatment. To engage the sympathy of those whom they have wronged, they assume the aspect of poverty, declaring that their mark is worthless and themselves bankrupt. The world, hypnotised, listens to the sorry tale with respect, and sets about the task of alleviating Germany's sufferings, as though in her prosperity lay the sole hope of a ruined Europe.

Remit our debts, cry the cunning Germans, or we turn Bolshevik and drag the world with us to the gutter. Half propaganda, half blackmail, the cry falls upon listening ears. And at the very moment of pleading poverty, the Germans plunge into extravagance. They send their money abroad, that it may be beyond the reach of their creditors. Or they turn it into such portable property as pictures and jewels, that it may escape the mere risk of a levy on capital. Meanwhile, what is known as the Stinnes group is ready to invest its money in the rehabilitation of Russia, or in any other schemes which will fill its own pockets and do no damage to the pretty picture that has been drawn of a Germany poor and virtuous. Private wealth and public poverty jostle one another as near neighbours. Nor do they who were victims once of German aggression shrink from giving the aggressors another chance. They forget that in Germany commercial expansion means military expansion, and they are convinced by

German propaganda that a full pocket for the Germans means a full pocket for themselves. Thus our enemies play upon the greed of the commercial classes with a simple cunning which recalls the system of hypocrisy wherewith they prepared Europe to receive their assault.

And now they carry their propaganda a step further, and without apology or hesitation proclaim that in 1914 they were themselves the victims, and that the war was made upon them by others. They are already elaborating their plans for a new attack, and as they aim high, it is clear that they are confident of the result. We are able to quote, word by word, the text of an "audacious circular" which was sent to the office of the Clarendon Press at Oxford, and fell into the hands of Mr C. R. L. Fletcher, a delegate, who permits its publication in these pages. It comes from Munich, Sendigerstrasse 80, and is the work of Dr Otto Pflaum. This is what the egregious doctor writes :—

"DEAR SIR,—The editors of the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte' (one of the best-known German political periodicals, which, I presume, is not entirely unknown to you) have recently published two booklets for the purpose of proving in an impartial and matter-of-fact way that Germany is not responsible for the outbreak of the war, that the charges referring hereto have been found to be

false, and that therefore the Treaty of Versailles is built upon faulty accusations, thus imposing an outrageous injustice on Germany. An American has translated these booklets that they might be made accessible to the English-speaking world, and therefore help to clear the path for truth and justice. The first one—the translation of the ‘*Gegenrechnung*,’ written by August Galling, M.D., Ph.D., Professor at the University of Munich—has just appeared under the title of ‘*The Counter-charge*.’ The second—the translation of ‘*Der Grosse Betrug*’ (The Great Deceit)—is to appear in a few days. Besides that, another booklet has of late appeared by Dr Trefz, named, ‘*Do you know Germany?*’ which, taking into consideration the history, culture, and geographical position of Germany, tries to give in an objective manner a picture of the country of to-day, and especially shows her present political and economical condition in consequence of the Treaty of Versailles.

“May I hope, sir, that provided these facts meet with your interest, you will be kind enough to inform me how many copies of these booklets I may forward to you? I would consider it a special favour if you would agree to furnish me with the addresses of your friends or other prominent persons who might be interested in receiving copies.—Sincerely yours,

“OTTO PFLAUM.”

The old note is plainly discernible. This monstrous letter carries us back to the bitter years when Germany was covering the world with her cunning lies. The absurd Pflaum assumes, with an easy air of confidence, that Germany is blameless and innocent. He assumes also that England is ready to accept as the truth the German misrepresentation of history. And he shoots at big game, does the Bavarian professor. He hopes to bring down in a single shot the Delegates of the Clarendon Press. Not content with this achievement, he thinks that the delegates will direct his next aim at “friends or other prominent persons.” If it succeeded it would be a clever, as well as an economical, method of distributing the dum-dum bullets of falsehood, and though he has obviously failed in his first shot, he may with a second barrel be more successful.

At any rate, it is important that Englishmen should be warned. In the past they have shown themselves strangely accessible to the childish propaganda of Germany. There are too many in our midst to whose tongues such words as “our German friends” trip too easily. Our intellectuals still believe that it is a mark of superiority to love their enemies better than their friends, and cannot get out of their mouths the taste of the sauerkraut that they ate in long vacations spent among the Boches. They have already forgotten, and

the politicians have forgotten with them, the four long years of war which they waged with the Germans; they have forgotten the cruel and barbarous means by which the Germans hoped to wrest the victory; they have forgotten the thousands of lives sacrificed for their cause all the world over. The Germans, indeed, may claim that the policy of frightfulness, which should have besmirched their honour for ever, has been justified, politically, by the event. Our demagogues still go in fear of Germany. They would conciliate her by all means in their power. They stand, hat in hand, before the representatives of the Huns. Mr Lloyd George has forgotten that there are any devastated provinces in Northern France. He sees in the French, our old allies, with whom our sons bled and died, a mob of military adventurers. It is true that when he was faced by a General Election he boasted that he would search the pockets of the Germans and bring their Kaiser to justice. Of course he did none of these things. To-day he regards our enemies as the victims of French aggression, and, obedient to their malicious propaganda, pleads their cause in the council-chamber of Europe. Reflect for a moment what effect this friendliness towards Germany must have upon France, to whom we owe all the help and sympathy we can give her. For four years France was the battlefield of Europe. Her fields were devas-

tated, her towns and villages levelled with the ground. Her mines and her factories were wantonly destroyed, as part of the settled policy of Germany. The Germans thought, in their wicked cunning, that if France were obliterated as a commercial rival, they would have a better chance for the sale of their wares when once the peace was signed. Thus they set France a task to perform which might well daunt that gallant country, and it is this task which Mr Lloyd George is foolish enough to underrate. True it is that France is being slowly built up again, but the French themselves, not the Germans, are doing, and paying for, the work of reparation.

The French, therefore, have good reason to complain, and in their complaints they receive little sympathy from the British Government. The conference of London failed, as the other conferences have failed, because Mr Lloyd George keeps it firmly fixed in his mind that Germany is his friend, not France. The discussion of the terms upon which Germany should be permitted a moratorium came to no good end, because M. Poincaré and Mr Lloyd George find it impossible to reach an agreement. Nor can it be said that M. Poincaré was inaccessible to reason. Even had a settlement seemed probable, the Balfour Note would have made it hopeless. To suggest at one and the same moment that France should pay Great Britain what

she owes, and that Germany should be relieved of the burden of indemnity, was a very short way to bring the Conference of London to an end. As an acute critic says, "France is forced to press Germany, while Germany is encouraged to resist France." What wonder is it, then, that the breach widens between France and Great Britain?

It is idle to minimise the effect of the breach between the two nations, whose happiness and prosperity depend upon a settled friendship. "Never in the past," says the correspondent of the '*Temps*,' which always supports a moderate policy, "has the British Government shown such stiffness and obstinacy." And the soundest of the French politicians see in the conduct of Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues a resolute determination to transfer their sympathy and affection from France to Germany. Now, this enmity towards France—we might almost call it treachery—is not at all to the mind of the British people. The British people, if it were allowed to express its opinion, would declare frankly and freely in favour of its trusted ally. Unfortunately, the British people, like the British House of Commons, is gagged. Whatever views of its own it may cherish, it is invited to suppress them, and to place its honour and its future unreservedly in the hands of Mr Lloyd George, whose obstinacy and ignor-

ance are familiar to us all. Meanwhile the French, unable to distinguish between the British people and Mr Lloyd George, the man whom they believe its mouthpiece, lay the charges of hostility where they should not be laid, and are driven to believe that the Entente, which has saved Europe, and upon which still depends the security of France and Great Britain, has been brought to an end.

But, whatever happens, the Entente must remain respected and inviolate. It is, and should be always, the keystone of our political arch. For once sentiment and policy combine. We all recognise the vast debt which we owe to the gallantry and courage of France. Had it not been for her splendid resistance to the onslaught of Germany, the civilisation of Europe would have been submerged by the flood of German arrogance. As we shared the victory, so it is our duty to share the benefits, such as they may be, of the peace. Had we freely cancelled the debt which France owes us, instead of making its cancelling contingent upon the amiability of America, we should have done no more than was right and proper. To pretend that our losses are equal to the losses of France, to set our unemployment, caused largely by the tactlessness and cowardice of our politicians, against the devastation of her fair provinces, is to misread the whole lesson of the war. And even if Mr Lloyd George has his way, and

in obedience to German propaganda puts Germany on her feet at the expense of France, how will it profit us? Will unemployment decrease? Will so simple a feat of jugglery persuade prosperity to smile upon us all again? Of course, none of these things will happen. We shall merely do our best to ensure the greatest calamity of all—the Teutonising of Europe. We shall, in the end, exchange the wit and intellect, the understanding and the critical faculty of France for the hobnailed Kultur of Germany, and in thus encouraging the False and depressing the True we shall hinder, without cause and to no purpose, the progress of the arts.

For it is to France that we have looked, and still look, for artistic sympathy. Throughout the centuries we and the French have met again and again, and have exchanged, as equals, our knowledge and our taste. If we throw France wantonly to the wolves of Kultur, we involve the whole world in the gravest calamity. And, as we have said, what is right in this matter is also politic. The Entente is essential to the proper direction of foreign affairs. The fate of Great Britain is inextricably interwoven with the fate of France. If France were permitted to fall a victim to German cunning or to German brutality, the life of England would be short indeed. And there is another danger, to which dis-

loyalty to France would speedily expose us. If we isolate ourselves, we should isolate France also, and France, in her fear of isolation, might throw herself into Germany's arms. "France," says the '*Temps*,' "cannot afford to be in difficulties with England and with Germany at the same time, and this truth must ever" be present to the minds of French statesmen." In what a situation should we find ourselves if, foiled of her alliance with us, France held out the hand of friendship to Germany? It is in this direction that Mr Lloyd George is driving our allies, and if we find ourselves alone in the world, with a compact Europe against us, it will be the doing of our Prime Minister and of those feeble colleagues who bow the knee to his mysterious authority.

The French, rightly distrusting Mr Lloyd George's policy, rightly also deplore his frivolity. They picture him to themselves as setting golf before the peace of Europe, and subordinating the future of the Entente to the imperative habit of the week-end. He would be less dangerous, perhaps, if he gave himself wholly to golf, if he was content to illustrate his parochial patriotism by the breeding of goats. But these things are not enough for his restless spirit. He has at last made up his mind to deck his brow with the laurels of authorship. As he became a great statesman without training and without aptitude, so he will

become a great writer. Nothing is easier. He has the will, and a typewriter and half a dozen secretaries will do the rest. According to the Sunday papers, whose special task it is to reveal the great man and his genius to an appreciative world, Mr Lloyd George will come forth, at a single step, to the head of all the authors that ever were. No sooner did the subservient editors make the announcement than they prophesied, loudly and confidently, the success of their hero. Of course, they judge the masterpiece by a simple standard—the immediate profit which it will make. They began by hinting that they would not be surprised if the genius of the great man were not rewarded by six figures, and after the simple passage of a week they declared, openly and with authority, that six figures had already been offered and accepted. There's a triumph for you! Mr Lloyd George, already the Welsh Pitt, will emerge after a brief recess as the Welsh Shakespeare. But with this difference: that Shakespeare wrote and worked for many a year, and never could boast of six figures in all his inglorious life.

And how is it that Mr Lloyd George can scale at a bound heights hitherto inaccessible? He will reveal (for six figures) the secrets of his official life. He has discovered a short cut to authorship which escaped all his rivals—Disraeli, Gladstone, Lord Balfour, and Lord

Rosebery. These Ministers wrote in their hours of leisure. But they wrote to pass the time and to add very moderately to their income. The fiction, the history, the philosophy which were their hobbies, had nothing to do with the facts which had come under their official notice. They used the talents which God had given them like gentlemen and scholars. Their works were neither popular nor scandalous, and not one of them ever aspired to six or even five figures. Mr Lloyd George has made an end of reticence. He is, as his friends would say, "out for the stuff." He thought, for a foolish moment, that he would postpone the writing of his memoirs until his retirement. He has thought better of it. Statements have been made which he thinks need immediate contradiction, and he will devote the few months of the recess to surpassing in skill and profit all the authors that ever were. The job will not take him long, nor will it try his facile genius too highly. For so great a man as he it is a mere month's work to excel all the historians that have ever lived—at least in the size of the cheque that will be given him.

And yet we read the news of Mr Lloyd George's authorship not without misgiving. He vulgarises literature—if indeed he may be said to have any touch with literature—as he has vulgarised politics. He appeals at the top of his voice

to the large crowd. He uses the advertiser with the same skill which brings fame and pelf to the soap-boiler. And he is the Prime Minister of Great Britain! He is paid—amply, though not in six figures—to preserve the dignity of the Empire, and he goes into the market-place like a cheap-jack. And the worst of it is, that the wares which he has to sell belong to each one of us. Had he not been the servant of the State, he would have had no story to tell at all; and he sets another very bad precedent—he has set many others—by bragging, or by permitting others to brag, that he can turn the position of first Minister of the Crown to excellent account. If the acceptance of the six figures were the sure prelude of his retirement, we would make the best of the loss of dignity. Alas! when the vast sum is safely lodged at his bank, he will be ready to rush back into the arena of politics. And the book, when it comes, with its serial and its colonial and its foreign rights, will be wholly worthless to all save Mr Lloyd George himself. He will get the six figures. We shall be fobbed off with an inchoate mass of ignorant statements, inaccurate arguments, and false criticisms.

Lord Northcliffe, whose death the whole world has deplored, was the true child of his age. He represented the restlessness, the curiosity, the mechanical skill of his time in a higher

degree than any other of his contemporaries. From the very outset of his career he appreciated the value of machinery. The many triumphs which he achieved—in journalism, on the road, in the air—were all closely connected with steam and petrol. His early success in journalism was due to the fact that he was the first to perceive the possibility of enormous circulations. The ambition of journalists before his time had not kept pace with the development of the printing-press. He saw, in a flash of inspiration, that with a quickly multiplying press there need be no limit to the number of purchasers. And the result of this insight was the 'Daily Mail.'

Having discovered the power of the printing-press, he took the second step towards a universal circulation. He studied the problem of distribution as it had never been studied before. He cared not by what means his newspapers travelled, so long as they reached the uttermost parts of the United Kingdom or the world in the shortest possible time. When there was a difficulty in reaching the North and the Continent within a few hours, he established presses in Manchester and in Paris, and sent the 'Daily Mail' across land and sea by the wires of the telephone. Were the railway service deficient, then the motor-car and the aeroplane must be called to its aid, and neither trouble nor expense seemed too

great, so long as the 'Daily Mail' was found at an early hour at every breakfast-table in the country. This mechanism of distribution may appear to some unimportant. It is, in truth, as all have discovered since Lord Northcliffe, the very beginning and end of journalism. After all, it is useless, as he once said himself, to produce the best journal that ever was seen and to keep it under your bed.

Having mastered the craft of swift and multiple printing, having perfected his method of distribution, Lord Northcliffe was like a politician who had collared the machine, and had not made up his mind which policy the machine should be used to support. He did not hesitate long. He was one of those rare men who are born with an instinctive knowledge of what the public wants. He was, so to say, the man in the street raised to the very highest power. He read the psychology of the crowd like an open book. And he made very few mistakes, because what the crowd wanted differed very little from what he wanted himself. Thus we begin to discern the cause of his vast success. He wished to sell as many of his newspapers as possible; all the secrets of swift efficient distribution were revealed to him; and he knew better than any other living man the matters, grave and gay, which the people preferred to read about. How, then, could he have failed? From the first inception of

'Answers' his success was assured, and ever after he talked, with perfect satisfaction and just a spice of kindly cynicism, about his "yellow journals."

As time went on he grew more and more intent to become not merely a master of the revels but a leader of men. The instant success of the 'Daily Mail'—a true romance of industry—gave him, for the first time, a sense of power. He was quick to see what he could do with the largest circulation in the country. To compel some millions of persons to read daily what he caused to be written was a means of aggrandisement of which none other had ever dreamed. The wise humdrum journals, which before the coming of Lord Northcliffe had pursued their grave and easy ways, had rarely excited their timid readers, who wished least of all to be surprised at their breakfast-tables. The 'Daily Mail' found readers where they had not previously been found—readers who had an unexpected influence upon public opinion. And, to the honour of Lord Northcliffe, it may be said that at the outset he used his power wisely and well. His judgment in domestic politics was often unsound. He had always a wise understanding of foreign affairs; he was unto the end a great patriot and a great Englishman. The strife of parties may have seemed to him less important than it was. He was instantly on the alert when the safety or honour of

England was questioned. At the time of the Boer War he more than any other public man kept up the spirit and the interest of the people. How he foresaw the German menace, how he clamoured for many years that we should put ourselves in a position to meet it, how, when the threat became a deed, he bent all his energies to the defeat of the foe, is mere matter of history. And the best measure of his services to Great Britain is the outburst of fury with which the news of his death has been received in Germany.

In foreign affairs he showed himself always the enemy of Germany, always the friend of France. For our neighbours across the Channel he professed an affection, which fell not a jot below his understanding. He was at home in Paris as in London, and his loudly expressed sympathy was the result not merely of sentiment but of knowledge. Nor did France ever stand in closer need of help than she did at the moment of Lord Northcliffe's death. Unless in this matter his policy be carried on with urgency and spirit, France will suffer a loss which cannot easily be made up to her. And his enthusiasm for France was neither a whim nor an accident. He loved her because he knew her, because she had been to him a second home. From the beginning of his career he was profoundly interested in foreign travel. He journeyed often and assidu-

ously, not lightly like a tourist, but with the gravity of one who desired to learn as he went. His liking for America and the Americans was no secret to them or to us, and if an Anglo-American Alliance is preserved, it will be largely due to Lord Northcliffe's tact and energy. Yet, with all his keen purposes, he was a genuine traveller. He liked also to travel for travel's sake, and he proved by a long persistent love of Spain that he could go abroad without keeping in mind the policies of the moment.

The good that he did is, or should be, apparent to us all. No man ever made so vast a disturbance in the world without doing much harm. And the worst that he did with his papers, we think, is that he made popular a certain commonness of speech and opinion. If you aim at a vast circulation you level down, and if you level down you cannot avoid vulgarity. The Northcliffe Press, as it came to be called, encouraged a triviality of interest and expression which did not improve the public taste. The new army of readers, untrained to scan the news with intelligence, demanded (and got) the personal paragraphs, the half scandals, the irrelevant follies which they wanted. Obviously it would be better that they should read nothing than that they should read these things; and though time, having taught them the reading habit, may teach them presently the art

of discrimination, there is little reason yet to be hopeful.

Above all, there can be no doubt that Lord Northcliffe, the man, was vastly superior to his press. Though in one aspect he was a man of business, eager to distribute his wares as widely as possible, though he seemed to embody all the qualities of modern life in his own self, he was a diligent student of books and a devout lover of the past. The accident of early poverty had made him determined, as he said, to be rich. Yet when once he had made his fortune, he cared less than any other millionaire for wealth as wealth. He was always open-handed and generous. He liked the things which money could bring, and he delighted to share these good things with others. And among the good things he prized books and he prized knowledge. He read widely and deeply at hours when most men are asleep, and he kept securely in his head the contents of the books which he read. Some one has recorded his persistent habit of asking questions. Ever apprehensive, he did not like to lose a chance of learning something fresh, and in this business a friend's

talk was as good to him as a book. In the same spirit of inquiry he wandered abroad. He must always pick up information as he went, and he delighted in the quickness of his brain as a prize-fighter in the strength of his arm. And, strangely, this champion of new discoveries and untried machines had a genuine respect for age and tradition. When he was confronted with ancient customs, he instantly saw their worth and meaning. A life-long prejudice against the older Universities was overcome, without argument or trouble, by two or three days spent in Cambridge. In brief, he was not one but several men. That the spark of genius burned within him it would be rash to deny. It burned dimly. True, he accomplished such things as none other has accomplished. Some of them were not worth accomplishment, and others had a result which he had not foreseen. Yet the good that he did outdoes the harm, and the harm would have been less if he had not acquired in youth such power as should not be entrusted to the hands of the wisest and oldest councillor among us.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXIV. OCTOBER 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

ULSTER IN 1921.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'TALES OF THE R.I.C.'

I. FROM SOUTH TO NORTH.

THE late summer and autumn of 1921 came as a welcome and unexpected relief to the Loyalists in Southern Ireland — an Indian summer before the black winter to follow.

The national trait of hoping for the best, and that something good would surely turn up, smothered the small still warning voice of common-sense and bitter past experience, and they looked forward eagerly and hopefully to a life of peace and quietness. They argued, poor souls, that they could not possibly be worse off under any form of government than under the British Government — so tired and distrustful were all parties in Ireland of that same Government.

And with the usual unreasonable sanguineness of their race, they fondly imagined that they

would be allowed, under the new régime, to keep their demesnes, farms, businesses, or shops, as the case might be, and live happily ever afterwards.

All quite foolish, of course; but at the same time it must be remembered that they had passed through a terrible two years, and it seemed to many that the devil they did not know could not by any stretch of imagination be worse than the devil they knew so well.

The writer, even if he lives to be an old, old man, will never forget his feelings when he realised for certain that the British Government had decided to desert the Southern Loyalists, and to leave them to as cruel a fate as has ever befallen any race.

For a fortnight after the Truce he was too dazed to

think or act; but needs must when the old gentleman drives, and at the end of that time he began to take thought for the future. The more loyal a man had been in the past, the more certain his fate in the future, and the very near future at that. It is a most terrible feeling when a man suddenly realises that, from no fault of his own except loyalty, the bottom has fallen out of his life; that he must start life afresh in another land, and leave the country he has lived in and loved. But there are few truer sayings than that it is better to be a live donkey than a dead lion.

At the beginning of the Truce the I.R.A. could not believe their good luck, and were strongly suspicious that the Truce was some diabolical trap of the British Government, which might catch them unawares any day.

There is no doubt that in the early summer of 1921 the I.R.A. were on the verge of collapse, and a few more weeks or months of steady pressure on the part of the British Army and the I.R.A. were beaten to their knees. They would have handed in their arms, and the rebellion would have been over—at any rate for another hundred years. It is too dreadful to think of how many lives and millions of pounds' worth of property Lloyd George's fatal surrender has already cost Ireland. And the end is not yet by a long way.

Days passed, and nothing

happened, but still the I.R.A. were not certain—the good old R.I.C. were still in the country, also an alarming number of British bayonets; also an ugly rumour that the Auxiliaries were recruiting large numbers of cadets, and for a twelve months' contract.

But gradually they realised the truth, and the writer realised that it was time to get a move on. England was unthinkable, the Colonies a long, long way off, and in the end, like many others, he compromised and went north.

The old saying that the wish is father to the thought can probably be applied with more truth to the Southern Irish than to any other race on the face of the earth, and their extraordinarily nimble minds assist them greatly in this art of self-deception.

If a Celt gets into trouble, entirely through his own fault, he will blame everybody and everything on God's earth as the cause of his trouble except the true cause—himself. And so good is he at this game, from generations of steady and intelligent practice, that in the majority of cases he completely deludes himself, and ends by being firmly convinced that he is the most badly injured man in the parish. But at the same time no one else is deluded.

When the far-seeing Ulstermen saw that Home Rule was assuming alarming proportions, they called on the Southern Loyalists to join hands and fight Home Rule tooth and

nail, pointing out to them that united they might possibly stand, but divided they would most surely fall. This was after the war, and, as usual, the Southerners procrastinated; pointed out that they lived on amicable and friendly terms with their Nationalist neighbours; protested that they detested politics; that they were all Irishmen, and so on.

Then came the time when the Ulstermen saw that Home Rule was inevitable; and knowing the true inner meaning of so-called Home Rule and the results which were certain to follow (and have followed), they decided to work out their own salvation in their own way.

The British Government then tried its best to force Ulster under a Dublin Parliament; but, finding what they were up against, compromised, and partition followed.

The Southern Loyalists now realised that they were in the soup, and hunted high and low for some one to throw the blame on for the parlous state they were in, and their eyes fell on the Ulstermen.

Nothing was now bad enough for the men of the Black North. They had deserted their comrades in the South. They had broken their oath to fight Home Rule to the death. They were the sole cause and reason of the division of the country and

all the trouble therein. Why wouldn't they come in, and all would be well? Their common-sense and level-headedness (blarney) were just what were wanted in an All Irish Parliament to make an Utopia of the country—to make it the grandest country in the world, and incidentally save the Southern Loyalists' bacon.

The Ulstermen retorted that it was too late to save the men of the South, and that for Ulster to commit suicide by coming in under a Sinn Féin Parliament in Dublin could not by any stretch of imagination save or help the Loyalists of the South.

From that time on the Southerner has blamed the Ulsterman for all his present woes and those which he realises are to come; and he knows, poor devil, that the coming ones will surely be the worst he has ever known, or have ever been known in this unhappy land. The Ulsterman was a bigot—the biggest in Ireland; a traitor—had he not deserted the South? a shopkeeper, who only thought of his own dirty pocket. The persecution of the Roman Catholics in Ulster was a disgrace to any civilised land. And so on *ad nauseam*—the old story of blaming any one and anything except himself. And so it will ever be to the end of the tale.

II. OUTLOOK IN THE NORTH.

The outlook for the North of Ireland at the beginning of the winter of 1921 was about as black as it well could be; and whichever way the Ulsterman looked he could see nothing but trouble ahead, and yet more trouble.

All Ulster asked was to be allowed to remain within the British Empire, and to be let alone to carry on her industries and work out her own salvation. One would have thought a fairly reasonable wish and one to be respected; but unfortunately it did not fit in with the policy of Sinn Féin.

So great was the tension in Ulster and so difficult the position of the Northern Government, that any sudden and unfortunate incident—as the shooting of a popular Orangeman or Roman Catholic—might have started civil war any day.

The extreme party in the North were beginning to talk freely and openly of an Ulster Republic. They declared, and rightly, that they had been treacherously deserted by the British Government, and in their sudden and fierce anger would not stop to realise that the British Government and the English people are not always the same thing. No: they were through with the British, and would fight Sinn Féin to the last ditch and the last boy.

The nervous members of the community—probably many of

them had business connections with the South—said that it would be impossible for the North to stand out; that there could never be peace in Ireland as long as there was partition; that if there was not peace in the country soon all would be ruined; that the British Government was determined to force the North in under an All Ireland Parliament, and that it would be better to chance possible ruin under that Parliament than to face certain ruin by standing out. In fact, all the usual arguments which the weak produce when confronted by violence.

But luckily there is in Ulster a great and strong party of as fine and upright men as can be found in the British Empire, or even in the world: men who, no matter which country they may go to, leave their mark on that country and are recognised as its most valuable citizens.

These men—the backbone and heart of Ulster—combine the business capacity of the English with the grit and determination of their Scottish ancestors. True, they lack the showy charm of wit and vivid imagination of the Celt; but when it comes to the stern realities of life and the fight of a race for its very existence, there is no possible doubt which traits will carry a race through to victory.

They calmed down the hot-

heads who were clamouring for an Ulster Republic, showed them the folly of alienating the sympathies of the great English nation (as distinct from their contemptible Government); pointed out that alone Ulster would most likely perish or become the slave of the Celt, but that as long as they remained united with their English cousins Ulster would stand, and stand as long as the British Empire remained in existence.

They put courage into the faint-hearted, pointed out to them that they were playing into the hands of Sinn Fein, showed them that once their businesses were at the mercy of a Sinn Fein Government they would be crushed out of existence to pay the taxes and salaries of the sloths in the South, and made men of them in spite of themselves.

Slowly but surely this party began to form and strengthen public opinion—a useful commodity in any country, which the British Government had effectively destroyed in the South some time ago, and had badly undermined in the North—in the right direction: to form a Government of the best men in Ulster, which would govern, and not give in to any and every man or party who threw a bomb or pointed an automatic at them.

When the Northern Government first came into being, it was faced with as difficult a task as any Government has ever had to face.

Given fair play and a clear

field all would have been plain sailing, and in a very short time there is no doubt that Ulster would have been better, or at any rate as well, governed as any part of the Empire, in spite of the youthfulness of its Government.

Unfortunately, not only had they to fight Sinn Fein without and within, but also to try and pull with the British Government, which, having once embarked on its suicidal policy of abject surrender to the gunmen, was bound to carry on this policy in the vain hope that by so doing it might avoid the crash which is in reality only a matter of time.

For a considerable time the majority of the signs of weakness and irresolution for which the Ulster Government was blamed by its public were in reality the result of the paralysing control of the Imperial Government, anxious at any cost—in fact, forced—to placate its Sinn Fein allies. The Ulster Government, rightly anxious to appear at all costs to be in complete accord with the Imperial Government, took upon its shoulders, without a word of public complaint, the blame which should have been laid at the door of the Imperial Government.

Most countries have had years in which to build up the various departments necessary to carry on the government of a country; Ulster had only days in which to carry out this difficult task.

A good civil servant cannot

be trained in a few days. Doubtless there was plenty of good material in Ulster, but practically all untrained. There only remained to bring in civil servants from Dublin, available by the break-up of the Dublin Castle staff, and import Englishmen. At once there arose a cry that the only credential to an Ulster post was an English accent.

When the Stand-fast was sounded in the South, Sinn Fein concentrated all its energy, venom, and hatred on the North: determined to make it impossible for the Northern Government to get going at all, and so rush them off their feet and in under the Dail at once.

Southern gunmen, flushed with their unexpected victory over the British Army, were only too ready to volunteer for "active service" in Ulster. Flying columns, which received the same pay as the Ulster Specials (there was plenty of English money flying about in Dublin at this time), were formed, and proceeded to coax the Ulstermen into partnership with O'Duffy's lead and bombs.

Walking the streets of Belfast a man might be forgiven for thinking he was in Cork, so many youthful Southerners might be met in every street.

To meet this conspiracy the Northern Government had a very small handful of ASpecials, and the R.I.C. who had been stationed in the Six Counties at the time of the Truce.

In the A Specials was the makings of a fine force; but, alas! by now the R.I.C. were heart-broken—their discipline as good as ever, but with no heart in their work.

And the pity is that not so very long before the R.I.C. were the finest police in the world; and probably we may never see finer: a very good example of how a Government which betrays its servants can ruin any force.

And not least among the difficult tasks of this young Government was the forming of a new police force in a time of open rebellion.

Lastly, the Northern Government had to devise plans to meet and defeat the Sinn Fein conspiracy from within and without. And this was the most pressing problem of all, and the hardest to solve.

True, there were a certain number of British troops in Ulster; but these were simply used to quell riot, being under the control of the British Government, who appeared to regard the sniping and bombing activities of the Sinn Fein gunmen as the playful antics of youthful politicians.

And to make matters harder still for the Ulster Government, their extreme partisans seemed to consider that now that the control of the British Government was removed, they should have a free field for their own activities and all the favour.

At this time the feeling of Loyalists throughout the Six

Counties was most bitter against the British Government: it was plain to all that Lloyd George and his mongrel party had every intention of throwing Ulster after the Southern Loyalists to the Sinn Fein wolves, if pressed by his newly-found friends in Dublin.

III. IMPRESSIONS OF ULSTER.

When crossing most frontiers in Europe the change is gradual and almost imperceptible, the different races merging on their borders; but on entering the Six County area from the South one at once realises that, though there is little, if any, change in the appearance of the country at first, except that the land gradually becomes inferior, the inhabitants are quite a different race. And, moreover, that the industry of these same inhabitants is of a very different quality to that of the Southern Celts.

The difference in the train service is most marked. For, whereas the train service in the country districts of the South and West is in every department truly Irish, once the train leaves Enniskillen a traveller might imagine that he had been suddenly transferred to a thoroughly efficient English line.

The carriages are pleasantly clean and odourless, and no longer smell like a shebeen in the early hours of a summer morning; the train leaves a station smoothly and not with the sudden and violent neck-dislocating jerk of a Southern "express"; time is some object, and in the handling of

traffic there appears to be some system and order instead of endless chatter and confusion.

In the British Isles it would be hard to find richer land than in many parts of the South and West of Ireland; and in Europe it would be harder still to find more easy-going farmers or a more out-of-date system of farming than in the South and West of Ireland.

In the North you may search in vain for the rich pasture lands of Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford, not to mention the great grazing plains of Meath and Kildare, probably the finest land of its kind in the world. Nor will you even find any of those queer pockets of wonderfully fertile soil which are dotted about so many districts in the West, often surrounded by bare rock.

No, the North has been rightly named the Black North, and the land is far inferior to that in the South.

But if his land is indifferent, the Ulsterman is a good farmer, and understands how to conjugate the good old English verb "to work." In the North, untidy, tumble-down farm-houses are very hard to find;

fields covered with weeds are conspicuous by their absence; the breakfast-hour in winter is nearer 7 A.M. than noon; and all-night dances are rather the exception than the rule. Parts of Co. Armagh remind the traveller of Cheshire.

In the same manner as a Frenchman forms his opinion of the British according to his impressions of London, and an Englishman of the French from his "experiences" in Paris, so do most strangers take Belfast as their standard of Ulster. And, as usual, all are wrong. Belfast corner-boys—Green and Orange—are about as good a sample of Ulster as the night-walkers—male and female—of Piccadilly are of the English, or the denizens of the night pleasure haunts of Paris of the French.

Throughout the Six Counties of Ulster there are to be found as fine yeoman farmers—the backbone of a nation—as any part of England or Scotland can show. Alas! that only a very short time ago the same could be said of nearly every county in Ireland—the type of men who formed the Ulster Division, and died by the thousand for the Empire at Thiepval and on other famous battle-fields in France. It is an actual fact that in parts of Ulster where formerly these loyal men were in a strong majority, they are now in a slight minority to their rebel Sinn Fein neighbours, solely owing to the fact that they sent their sons to France to fight and die.

And in spite of the repeated efforts of the British Government to drive them under the rule of a Sinn Fein Parliament in Dublin, these men are still loyal to King and Empire—the greatest miracle of modern times.

If and when these fine men realise some day that the British Government are determined to sacrifice them on the altar of their mad policy of seeking peace by concession to violence and rebellion, can it be wondered at if their loyalty turns to bitter hatred and contempt? And if by any evil chance such a day does come, the Shinner as an enemy will seem a childish thing of no account in comparison with the embittered Ulsterman.

To understand the Southern Irish it is first necessary to trace the origin of the different races which go to make up this so-called nation.

An Englishman's idea of an Irishman is still largely based on the model of the two Macs of music-hall fame, and he thinks if there is any difference at all between these much-brogued comedians, it is only that the Southerner is a Roman Catholic and the Ulsterman a Protestant: a trifle in England, though seemingly a difference of more account in the Isle of Saints. Beyond this the average Englishman does not trouble to go.

Further, an Englishman is confused by the fact that the Southern Irish are divided into two classes—or, it would be

more accurate to say, were divided.

First, the gentry, originally the landowners, who were mostly Protestant, and (formerly) wholly loyal, largely because they had no Celtic blood in their veins, but were pure-bred descendants of the various waves of British who have at different times—Elizabeth's and Cromwell's chiefly—started out to fight in Ireland and ended by settling there.

This class of Irishman (really a type of the English with the wit, good manners, sympathy, and quickness of perception and understanding of their Celtic neighbours grafted on to the sound English stock) has produced some of the finest citizens of the Empire—generals, statesmen, lawyers, &c. And, most important of all, this class has always been the friend and supporter of the British Empire in Ireland for centuries, and as a class has always refused to join any conspiracy against the British Government.

It is not generally known, but it is an interesting fact, that Parnell tried his best to induce the Irish landlords to join him. Not only did he visit the bigger men personally, but he had agents in every part of the country who did their best by promise and threat to force the smaller landlords to join Parnell's conspiracy. Parnell completely failed, to the everlasting credit of the Irish landlords of that day.

The second class, forming the majority of the rural and urban population of the South, consists of Celts, pure and otherwise, and is by religion Roman Catholic.

English sportsmen and tourists have met and liked members of the class, chiefly as gamekeepers, fishermen, car-drivers, and hotel-keepers, and have been delighted by their wit and charming manners. The pleasantest and most amusing companions for sport or pleasure in the world, but in reality men always wearing a mask, and on their guard when with English people.

But in the same way as a Socialist's views on *meum* and *tuum* vary according to the amount of this world's goods he possesses, so does an Irish peasant's love for a republic and fighting vary! The Irish farmer who owns twenty acres of decent land cares nothing for Monarchy, Empire, or Republic, as long as he has peace and plenty. The Irish shop-boys, corner-boys, and farmers' younger sons, possessing nothing under the Empire, imagine that under a republic they will gain wealth without working.

These boys have been brought up on the history of the tales of woe of British injustice and brutality of one and two hundred years ago; but their teachers have carefully and consistently avoided telling them anything about the benefits of British rule in Ireland during the last century: land purchase, religious freedom for

all sects, the great advantages of being a British citizen in the greatest Empire of all times, and the protection of the British Navy.

To turn to the North, one finds again that the population is divided into two clear-cut classes—the loyal Protestants (here in a majority) and the Roman Catholics, to be subdivided into Sinn Fein rebels, neutral Nationalists, and a small number of Loyalists.

To any one accustomed to the lavish hospitality and brilliant wit of the South, the Northern Loyalists at first sight appear dour and reserved; but on closer acquaintance one cannot help being impressed by their sterling qualities, not only in public but in private life.

Certain miserable English newspapers (solely for political ends) have carried on an inspired and sustained attack on Ulster ever since she refused to join in the endless dog-fight in the South at the bidding of Lloyd George, who invariably heralded his subtlest underground efforts to force Ulster under Collins by publicly proclaiming in England that, come what might, he would be no party to the coercion of Ulster. And the jackal press of the South, mad at seeing Ulster slipping out of their clutches, joined in this attack with an endless stream of vile lies and distorted misrepresentation—the old Sinn Fein propaganda mixture of fifteen ounces of lies and one ounce of truth.

Many thousands of English,

Scotch, and Welsh—not to mention French and Belgians—read these newspapers, and these only, every day of their lives. And, if you will only repeat a lie often enough in the Press, the average man and woman will end by believing it implicitly.

These newspapers would have the world believe the Belfast mobs (they call all Protestants and Loyalists in Belfast Orangemen and Orange mobs) spend their days grubbing after money and their nights murdering Catholics and burning their homes. If a Protestant is murdered his religion is carefully left out; if a Roman Catholic is murdered his religion is put in large type; that Orangemen are specially enlisted in the Special Constabulary by the Northern Government in order that they may carry out a campaign of murder, rapine, and arson, with the object of exterminating the Roman Catholics in the North.

The truth is that the Belfast Loyalists are as fine a race as the British Empire can show: hard-working, clean-living, decent, and orderly folk. Any man who doubts this statement should pay a visit to Belfast and see the people for himself.

No man with an open mind can live any time in Belfast without being struck with the extraordinary contrast between the two parties, not only in their success in life, but in their general appearance and behaviour. It is not necessary

to ask if you are in a Loyalist street or district—the look of the people, the children, and the houses will tell you at once.

All the Loyalists in the North ask is that they may be let alone by the South in order to carry on their businesses and Government in their own way. This is just what the South has no intention of doing. A prosperous, hard-working, well-governed North, and a bankrupt, idle, and badly-governed South, rent by civil war and devastated by Bolshevism, is hardly the picture Sinn Fein wishes to present to the rest of the world.

Except for the usual crime of any large industrial city, there would be no trouble of any kind in Belfast if the I.R.A. would confine their activities to the Free State. Not only do the local members of this force carry on their so-called "war" operations in Belfast and Ulster, but the G.H.Q. of the I.R.A. in Dublin sent up gunmen to Belfast to help the local braves, and also to direct operations, or, as their propaganda put it, to protect the persecuted Roman Catholics in the North from Craig's brutal Special Constabulary. One wonders what Lloyd George and Collins would have said had the Northern Government, under the pretence of protecting the unfortunate Loyalists in the South, sent gangs of Special Constables, camouflaged as corner-boys, to

assassinate the various members of the Provisional Government in Dublin.

It is quite true that there are in Belfast parties of Protestant gunmen—quite wrongly described in the Southern and English Press as Orange gunmen. No Orange Lodge in Ulster would admit or retain any gunman as a member.

It is also true that these Protestant gunmen have attacked and shot Roman Catholics, but always after some foul Sinn Fein outrage, such as the bombing of unarmed workmen in tramcars, the assassination of members of the R.I.C. and Special Constabulary, the persistent sniping of any and every Protestant man, woman, and child from a Sinn Fein quarter, and such-like deeds of Sinn Fein "warfare."

One of the Northern Government's greatest difficulties has been to restrain the passions of a very small section of its most extreme supporters, men whose passions are continually fanned to a white heat by the shameless propaganda of the Dail Publicity Department, and roused to a pitch of fury by the deeds of murder and arson of the gunmen specially sent to Belfast from the South to stir up strife in the North and never allow it to die down, the idea being that the North may know no peace or quiet until it consents to the dictates of the I.R.A. in Dublin.

IV. I.R.A. IN BELFAST.

There is probably no need to remind the British taxpayer that a modern Government is a very costly machine to keep going—many may think too costly for the return it makes.

When Sinn Fein realised that they had at last thoroughly put the wind up Lloyd George, they began to look around for ways and means of taxation for their Government, which now appeared certain to materialise in the near future. True, they might reasonably expect to extract many millions out of Lloyd George before he crashed, but the day must inevitably come when the British taxpayer would dig his toes in and refuse to be bled white.

South Ireland is essentially an agricultural country, and the obvious way to raise money was to tax the land of the farmers. Unfortunately for this simple plan the probability was that the farmers would have most votes in the great majority of the constituencies, and would have no intention of paying the piper—that had always been the job of the landlords and the British Government.

There only remained to tax industries—another quite simple way to raise money, provided you have industries; but in the South there are practically none if you except Guinness's Brewery and Jacobs' biscuit factory in Dublin, and Ford's motor-works in Cork.

Sinn Fein has always fought partition tooth and nail, not from any love for the Ulster Loyalists, but simply for love of their money, and also from the burning desire of the Celt to be top dog and get his own back out of the Anglo-Scots of Ulster.

Formerly Ulster fought Home Rule tooth and nail—first because she realised that the Celt is quite unable to rule, and would reduce Ireland in record time to a state of chaos (which he has done most thoroughly), and secondly, because she knew full well why Sinn Fein wished to get its heel on Ulster.

The eyes of Sinn Fein now turned towards the North with its great shipyards, linen factories, and many fine industries. Here was what they were looking for—a great and unending source of taxation to pay fat salaries and pensions to successful gunmen, who in the future would assume the toga of the statesman and the tail-coat of the Government official, according to the number of R.I.C. and British soldiers he had done in.

But the North saw the game as clearly as Sinn Fein did, and when the offer of partition was made by the British Government, had no alternative but to accept, though reluctantly, in order to escape from the clutches of Sinn Fein and spoliation.

Whereupon Sinn Fein bent

all its energy and resources of gunmen and money on forcing Ulster to come in with the South, simply and solely to get her money and to bring the Ulster Loyalists under the heel of Sinn Fein. And Sinn Fein found three cruel weapons to its hand—the I.R.A., propaganda, and the boycott.

After the terrible riots which took place in Belfast during August 1921, General O'Duffy, the liaison officer of the Sinn Fein Army in Ulster, let the cat out of the bag in a speech he made on the 4th September at Armagh, in which in a fit of peevish ill-temper he said that "he had placed sentries at vantage-points [in Belfast] who had made their presence felt [bombs and bullets], that he had ordered his troops to cease fire, but that the Ulstermen *would now have to decide whether they were for Ireland or the British Empire.*" If they decided against Ireland "we will have to put on the screw of the boycott, and *if necessary we will have to use the lead against them.*"

This speech, which probably the majority of the English people have never heard of, is of great significance, inasmuch as it outlines the policy which Sinn Fein meant to adopt to coax Ulster into surrender.

The Provisional Government have shown their disapproval of O'Duffy by promoting him rapidly from one important post to another: when last heard of he was in command of the Free State troops in

the south-west,—will we next see him in command on the Ulster border?

And O'Duffy has kept his word: for many months after his speech at Armagh his troops plied the unfortunate Loyalists of Ulster with bombs, bullets, and arson.

Towards the end of September, on a Sunday, a bomb was thrown at the corner of Wolff Street which wounded no less than thirty-eight people, all Loyalists. Yet one English paper at once reported that this dastardly outrage was "clearly the work of Unionists"—but forgot to give any reason at all why Unionists should bomb Unionists.

During the autumn and winter of 1921 Belfast suffered as no other city has suffered in modern times outside of Russia. In Johannesburg the agony was short; in Belfast it has been long, and a terrible strain on the citizens without a break during many weary months.

During the hearing of a case in a Belfast court a lawyer said to the Bench: "We are approaching the age of barbarism." Any age must have been barbarous indeed the records of which contain anything revealing human nature in a worse light than the atrocities committed by the I.R.A. in Belfast during the end of 1921 and the beginning of 1922.

The great majority of its citizens are law-abiding, enthusiastically loyal, and only

too anxious to live on good terms with all men. They have enough common-sense to know that everlasting strife and disorder spell ruin for any community, however rich it may be; and, on the other hand, they are wise enough to realise that to give in to naked violence also means red ruin.

The Truce in the South gave Sinn Fein its chance to concentrate on the North, and Belfast became the chosen area for the secret plottings and abominable acts of an organisation the objects of which are entirely destructive and subversive, its members filled with a hatred, as wicked as unreasoning, against all who support the Northern Government. Like the Russian Bolsheviks, they appear to be completely without scruple or compunction concerning the means used to achieve their ends, and their mentality is of the kind that makes constructive thinking an impossibility. In a word, they can live on destruction.

The Government Press has done its best for many months to fix the blame for the terrible disorder which followed on to the loyal party in Ulster, and the reason is not hard to find.

When the British Government had made up its mind to surrender to murder, and tried to come to terms with Sinn Fein, they appear to have been only too willing and eager to give way on every point as long as Ireland might appear a camouflaged part of the

British Empire; the English people, though completely bewildered, were not yet sufficiently accustomed to abject surrender to violence to swallow an Irish Republic—that would come afterwards when they had been better trained.

Unfortunately, Sinn Fein demanded Ulster's head on a charger, and to make matters worse, no Celtic persuasion could induce the hard-headed Ulsterman to believe that it was his duty to Ireland and the Empire to become a member of a rebel State instead of remaining a loyal member of the Empire. Most provoking and stupid of him!

Every dodge and trick was tried, always to the air of "No coercion of Ulster," but of no avail—Ulster refused to walk into the Sinn Fein parlour; and in the end she had to be allowed to have her own obstinate way and remain in the Empire.

The idea of trying to force a loyal province out of the Empire as the price of obtaining peace with a rebel province sounds too grotesque; but once a Government begins to yield to violence it loses all control over its policy, until at last it is forced into an impossible position.

With their usual procrastination, the British Government postponed the complete separation of Ulster from the rest of Ireland, in a vain hope that something might turn up at the eleventh hour to extricate them from

the bog into which they found themselves sinking deeper and deeper in their frantic efforts to get out.

Sinn Fein saw its opportunity and at once determined to make hay while their sun was shining, and to this end organised an intensified campaign of outrages in Belfast.

During the so-called war in the South between the British Government and the I.R.A., the latter were always clever enough not to allow gunmen to operate in their own districts: the local braves were used to a certain extent in a local ambush or outrage, but the leaders and organisers were invariably men from another part of the country.

Thus Cork men would be sent to organise a peaceful district in Mayo, and to carry out ambushes and attacks on the local R.I.C., while men from far Donegal would operate in Cork.

Still acting on this sound principle—few men are really upset by the sight of burnt houses until they see their own going up in flames—flying columns were got together in the South, and made their way in pairs to Belfast.

It must be remembered that the Truce was in operation at this time; hence the Northern Government were quite powerless to prevent gunmen moving about the country. It must also be remembered that the British Government were nominally governing Ireland; and though they made the Crown

forces stand fast, no steps were taken to confine the activities of the I.R.A., for fear of disturbing the peace atmosphere.

During the period of the Truce a temporary close season for police and soldiers was proclaimed by the G.H.Q. of the I.R.A. in Dublin; consequently sport in the South was very slack, and it was easy to enlist as many gunmen as were required for "active service" in Ulster.

If the British Government possessed any intelligence worthy of the name, they must have known what was coming. At any rate, the fact remains that they made no determined effort to save Belfast. The "peace atmosphere" was the important factor.

At one time in the winter of 1921 the Northern Government policed Belfast (or rather Belfast, less the Marrowbone and Falls Road districts) with platoons of A Specials. For a time the city was comparatively quiet, the gunmen having a wholesome dread of the A's.

In reply the I.R.A. threatened the Ulster border with flying columns, and the larger number of these platoons had to be rushed off at two hours' notice to the Border.

The gunmen in Belfast at once started in again bombing trams of shipyard workers returning from work, sniping from houses, pulling men out of trams and killing them in cold blood, and generally raising hell.

Many a night in the trenches in France passed more quietly than the nights of this winter in Belfast; in fact, hardly a night passed without heavy shooting in one or more districts. And strangely enough, as a general rule, the heavier the shooting the fewer the casualties.

It was part of the Sinn Fein campaign of terror to give the Belfast citizens no rest by day or night, and so create alarm and despondency, hoping that in time the people would lose their nerve and insist on the Northern Government coming to terms at any price with Sinn Fein for the sake of peace.

A night would pass quietly up to 11.30 P.M., and the citizens of a district would think that they were at last to have a night of unbroken sleep. Then some gunman would give the signal by firing either a single shot, or else he would make the inhabitants imagine he was firing a Thompson machine-gun by taking an automatic in each hand and firing them in quick succession from an attic window.

At once the signal would be taken up in every Sinn Fein street in the district, and heavy bursts of firing would banish all hope of sleep for the night.

This plan had another result. There would be a heavy burst of firing after curfew hour in a street; police in Lancias and Crossleys would be at once rushed to the scene of the firing, only to find all quiet and not a sign of a gun-

man to be seen anywhere. Nor had any of the inhabitants of the street seen one anywhere. Hardly had the police returned to barracks when the performance would be repeated, and so on throughout the night. By morning the police were worn out and thoroughly irritated by this succession of false alarms.

Roughly a quarter of the population is Roman Catholic, the great majority of whom are only too anxious to be respectable and law-abiding citizens if they were allowed to follow their own inclinations.

English people refuse to believe that the Roman Catholics in the North could be so shortsighted and foolish as to organise and carry out the campaign of murder and outrage which no man can deny has been going on in Belfast with hardly a check or respite for many months, and they are right in one sense and wrong in another. This is where the diabolical cleverness of Sinn Fein has come in. The part played by the bulk of the Roman Catholic population in this campaign has been a sad and ignoble one: they have been the unwilling accessories of crime. It remains to be seen when, if ever, the worm will have the courage to turn.

Knowing that the local gunmen of Belfast would be incapable, and probably unwilling, to establish a thorough and efficient reign of terror over their co-religionists and relations, the I.R.A. imported clever

and determined gunmen into Belfast—men who would have no diffidence in explaining to the Roman Catholics the part they would be expected to play in the coming Belfast “war,” nor any reluctance in carrying out the punishment promised to these unfortunate people if they refused to pull their weight, or—most serious of all—if they gave any information or help to the Northern Government.

For many months the Roman Catholics lived a life of terror, never knowing the day or hour when two or more strange gunmen might suddenly appear in their houses and demand board and lodging for an indefinite time; nor when the I.R.A. might establish the headquarters of an I.R.A. battalion or company with them, or make use of their houses as snipers’ posts or arsenals.

But even worse than this: the Roman Catholics in a street never knew when they might receive a peremptory order from the I.R.A. to leave their front doors ajar and their back doors open at a certain hour on a certain day.

This order always meant that an outrage—either a police ambush, the bombing of a tram full of unarmed and innocent men, women, and children, or the murder of some prominent citizen or official—was to be attempted in this street. And disobedience of this order, if found out, meant certain death.

A favourite form of amusement of the I.R.A. used to consist in what was commonly

called “shooting up” a district: these outrages took the form of shooting at every Loyalist who appeared within range for a whole evening, or perhaps in merely firing at intervals throughout the night to alarm the citizens.

Before one of these shoot-ups you might search every house in the district to be shot-up till dusk, and not find any arms or ammunition; but soon after dusk a furniture-van would appear in some street of the district, and at a suitable moment men would unload and distribute arms to the gunmen.

When the entertainment was over women would carry the arms away to the hiding-place again, concealing them on their persons and under their shawls.

In time the effect on the population became noticeable. A motor bicycle back-firing in Royal Avenue would cause a temporary panic amongst women and children. But on the whole the Loyalist population stuck it well; and beyond a certain amount of unreasonable criticism of the Government, showed no signs of the terrible strain, and the I.R.A. failed to shake the nerves of the sorely tried people as a whole.

After a time, finding throwing bombs at trams too dangerous to be pleasant, the I.R.A. resorted to the plan of leaving bombs, with time-fuses attached, and hidden in despatch-cases, inside trams.

One morning a tram arrived at the Junction in Royal

Avenue, where all trams turn, and the conductor on going up to the top found a despatch-case left behind by some passenger. When he had carried the case down he happened to hear a peculiar noise in it, and on opening the case found a live bomb with time-fuse ticking away merrily.

The usual panic ensued, nobody knowing what to do. Luckily a kerb flower-seller (an ex-soldier and a Roman Catholic) happened to be standing close by, and had the presence of mind to throw the water he kept for his flowers over the bomb, and so saved a critical situation. The Junction is always crowded, and an explosion would have killed or injured many.

The sequel is significant. The Corporation voted a grant of £50 to the gallant flower-seller, but when they came to look for him he had completely disappeared.

Can there be any doubt in the mind of any reasonable man why this unfortunate flower-seller disappeared?

The infamous canard that all this campaign of outrages was started and has been carried on by the Loyalists in Ulster against the Roman Catholics is contrary to all facts and common-sense. What object could the Loyalists possibly have? To ruin themselves? For that is the logical and inevitable end if the campaign is carried on long enough. The English people have more horse-sense than to believe that

the Ulster Loyalists are determined to ruin themselves.

On the other hand, what is the object of Sinn Fein? Perfectly plain, and they make no secret of it, boasting openly of how they mean to carry out their plan.

Sinn Fein expects and is determined by this brutal campaign of murder to strike terror into the hearts of the Ulster Loyalists, and so eventually to force them under the heel of a Sinn Fein Parliament in Dublin.

What is the object of a certain large portion of the English Press in trying to fix the guilt of this campaign of murder, outrage, and arson on the Northern Government and the Loyalists of Ulster? Also perfectly plain.

Collins knew well that the South could never carry on a Government without the North's contribution of taxes—the South is already on the verge of bankruptcy.

Lloyd George's wonderful Irish settlement depended on Collins's success, which, again, depended on forcing the North to join him. If Collins crashed, Lloyd George would follow suit. Hence the pressure brought to bear by the English Government Press on unfortunate Ulster.

Now it is not suggested that the rôle of the Loyalists in Belfast is invariably that of a passive target for the bullet of the Sinn Fein sniper, and that he never hits back.

After all, the Ulster Loyalists

are only human, and as a matter of fact not particularly patient under injuries, especially when those injuries take the form of assassination, incendiarism, and brigandage.

The Loyalists in Belfast have undoubtedly hit back, and hit very hard at times; but the primary responsibility for these reprisals rests with those who start the trouble, though the principle of reprisals is quite indefensible when carried out by private individuals.

It is beyond dispute that

the trouble in Belfast has been started time and again by the I.R.A. gunmen; the Loyalists then become maddened at the murder of friends and relations, and the wilder element of them turns on the Roman Catholics, and quite innocent people suffer. Such incidents must always occur in times of civil strife.

Take away the gunmen of the I.R.A., and Belfast would be as peaceful and well-behaved a city as any in the Empire.

V. SINN FEIN PROPAGANDA.

Few people in England realise that the recent victory of Sinn Fein over the British Government was largely due to excellent propaganda work in England, Australia, Canada, America, and Europe. A victory is also claimed over the English Army and nation; but any man who is not a Celt knows that this is nonsense.

Incidentally it would be interesting to know how much of the Sinn Fein funds collected during the late war all over the world was spent on propaganda, and how much on actual fighting—very probably the former largely exceeded the latter.

When Sinn Fein started its so-called war on Ulster, they wisely determined to carry on with the same policy which had proved so successful against the British Government—namely, to wage war by means of the weapons of propaganda,

outrage, and underhand intrigue.

The ordinary Englishman still cannot realise that it is quite possible to win a "war" by outrage, intrigue, and propaganda—always provided that they are ruthlessly and persistently applied, and that there are sufficient funds—and clings to the old-fashioned idea that a war is settled by the bayonet. He has probably taken part in several extremely unpleasant bayonet charges himself, and knows what an efficient weapon it is to win complete victory if handled with determination. He has also a supreme contempt for propaganda, and no belief in its efficiency.

Let him get rid of that foolish and old-fashioned idea once and for all—the victory nowadays is to him who can write the cleverest propaganda, shoot the

most of his fellow-countrymen in the back unawares, put the wind most vertically up the politicians, or bomb the most women and children from the cover of other women without coming to harm himself.

Talk of an invasion of Ulster by Sinn Fein leads the ordinary Englishman to look for a campaign like the invasion of Belgium by the Boches. His mind expects stirring accounts of swift advances of Sinn Fein columns of troops into Ulster, sieges and terrible battles, gallant bayonet charges by Sinn Fein gunmen, and equally gallant stands of Ulstermen with their backs to the wall.

A soul-stirring picture; but though the Ulsterman would certainly answer his name at the parade, the Sinn Fein gunman would be absent.

But the I.R.A. had no such picture in its mind's eye when it was settled to wage "war" on Ulster, in order to force her to submit to Sinn Fein. They knew that in a fair and open fight the Ulsterman would show the world the true value of the Sinn Fein gunman as a soldier. At present the world takes him at his own valuation.

No. With every reason they argued that if they could beat the Government of the greatest Empire in the world by propaganda, ambush, and outrage, they might surely start in on wee Ulster with every reasonable hope of success. And they would have undoubtedly been equally successful if the Ulster Government had been made of

the same inferior metal as the British Government.

This argument appeared quite sound (at any rate on paper), and was the means of inducing certain people in America and elsewhere to open their purses again and to put up a further supply of the all-conquering dollar, in order to complete the freedom of Ireland by the crushing of Ulster.

The dollars were quickly converted into arms and propaganda, and the invasion started.

The Ulsterman knew what was coming and warned the Englishman, who replied that if Sinn Fein gunmen from the South attacked the North, English troops would defend the latter.

The attack started, and continued by murdering police, bombing trams of known Loyalists, sniping, assassinating prominent Loyalists, burning factories and shops—in fact, by all the well-known methods of Sinn Fein warfare.

At the same time the Publicity Department in Dublin worked much overtime, turning out blood-curdling accounts of the pogroms of Roman Catholics in Ulster (especially in Belfast) by Orange gunmen. These articles were sent to all the principal papers in England, oversea Dominions, U.S.A., and Europe. The extra hot ones were reserved for the Southern Press in order to feed the flames of hatred for the North.

The Englishman, though at heart most anxious to help the

Ulsterman, was now completely bothered to know what was actually happening in Ulster, and whom to believe (as Sinn Fein intended he should be).

The Ulsterman declared that the I.R.A. were invading his country; the Shinner screamed that Orange mobs, by order of the Northern Government, were exterminating Roman Catholics in the North.

A pause, and the Ulsterman declared that if the Englishman did not come to his help, the North was lost. The Shinner promptly countered by telling the Englishman that if he did not intervene at once there would be no Roman Catholics left in the North to save.

The Englishman, still only too anxious to help his Ulster friend, did his best to find out which of these two contradictory statements was true, and, of course, failed hopelessly, as Sinn Fein meant and hoped he would.

Possibly at this point the English thought there might be a grain of truth in both statements, contradictory though they were.

As stated previously, the Englishman looked carefully for the usual signs of an old-fashioned invasion, and could find none. He then listened to the Sinn Fein side of the story, found evidence of an orgy of murder and outrage, especially in Belfast, and was more puzzled than ever to understand the situation.

On the surface it looked as though the Ulsterman's story

of an invasion was a boggy, with which he hoped to break up the Treaty, and that there was a large element of truth in the Shinner's story of the extermination of Roman Catholics in the North by Orange gunmen.

The Sinn Fein propaganda was going strong, according to plan.

The truth is that the Englishman has found it impossible to understand the situation in Ulster, or to believe that she is in dire peril.

And the reason of this is that the Englishman's judgment has been completely led astray by clever Sinn Fein propaganda, published broadcast through the Empire by the Government Press.

The significance of this cannot be overrated; and it is no exaggeration to say that if this state of ignorance is allowed to continue in England indefinitely, Sinn Fein will surely reap the full harvest of its diabolically clever propaganda and system of intrigue. And this system was not built up in a day nor even in a century; nor is it hard to realise who formed and perfected such a system of deceit and trickery.

On the other hand, if the Northern Government once fully realises that history teaches us the simple lesson that it is the duty of all Governments, whose real business it is to meet and defeat the attacks of such mean antagonists and frustrate their conspiracies, to oppose the savage violence of all

revolutionists with even-handed justice, no matter how stern and terrible, all will yet be well with Ulster.

Further, there is no doubt that it is a sound policy to meet lying propaganda with truthful propaganda. The power of the Press nowadays, insomuch that every man reads one or more newspapers, is so great that if one party is continually publishing abuse of a second party which never replies, it becomes a case of judgment by default; and in the end the man in the street will believe the accusations against the silent party, no matter how wild and absurd they may be.

Once this is done, Sinn Fein propaganda and intrigue will be fully exposed in their filthy nakedness to the eyes of all Englishmen; and in spite of the frantic efforts of the English Government to force Ulster in under the South, the invasion of Ulster by Sinn Fein will have failed.

Since the Provisional Government took over the government (?) of Southern Ireland, the confusion and chaos in all Government departments in Dublin have grown daily greater and greater, with one notable exception—the Publicity Department.

This department, far from showing any of the signs of ceasing to function, which the other departments have shown with ever-increasing greatness, has increased its output many times over both in quantity and quality.

The following, which appeared one morning in the 'Irish Independent,' is an example of what this department can turn out for home consumption when it really gets busy.

Probably few, if any, English readers saw this fine propaganda effort; also it is more than likely that many will not believe that such a collection of "frigid and calculated lies" really did appear in any newspaper outside the yellow press of the U.S.A.

EXTERMINATION PLAN IN BELFAST.

STARVATION AND MURDER.

APPALLING DAYS.

CATHOLIC COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT—

"Worse off than are the Armenians."

"Belfast Catholics being gradually but certainly exterminated by murder, assault, and starvation."

"Their houses burned, streets swept by snipers, life unbearable. Military forces inactive, Special Police hostile, Northern Government either culpable or inefficient."

"Your Government saved the Armenians, Bulgarians. Belfast Catholics getting worse treatment. Last two days here appalling."

The foregoing is a telegram sent to Mr Churchill and Mr Chamberlain by the Belfast Catholic Protection Committee.

"If the extremist section in the Free State had a couple of days' experience of the Short Strand and Marrowbone areas, they would soon agree to differ down South."

This is from the message of a Press Correspondent, which

forms an appropriate addendum to the telegram.

There are many honest and peacefully - disposed Roman Catholics in Belfast; and if they were once free of the terror of the I.R.A. they would be the first to admit that the above extract from the notorious 'Irish Independent' is nothing but a collection of calculated lies.

A bald lie is generally a stupid and dangerous form of propaganda, but not always in Ireland. And, moreover, in this case the Sinn Fein Publicity Department was producing the stuff many of its newspaper readers wanted to read.

And in turning out such evil reading they have several objects in view: to discredit the Northern Government in the eyes of England, America, and the rest of the world; to alienate sympathy from the Ulster Loyalists and make the English people think and believe that they are savages who are not worth saving, even if they should be threatened with annihilation; and lastly, they hope to incite the extreme Loyalist section in Belfast to commit outrages on the Roman Catholics there, and so provide material for genuine propaganda.

Though there are copious details given of the alleged murder of Roman Catholics by Protestant gunmen, no details are given of the actual process and results of the starvation of Roman Catholics, presumably by the Northern Government; possibly this is

a subject which is better dealt with by the imagination of the readers of the 'Independent.'

As regards the allegation that the Roman Catholics under the Northern Government are worse off than the Armenians under the Turk, it is probable that if Sinn Fein could have a really good dose of the Turkish régime, they might learn the real meaning of the word pogrom as distinct from its meaning in propaganda.

The Specials are charged with being hostile,—they are, but only against the Sinn Fein gunmen, who are striving with all their might to ruin Ulster. Further, can any one be more hostile than the I.R.A. have been towards both the R.I.C. and the Ulster Special Constabulary?

If these accusations are true, then the British Government ought to have taken steps at once to protect the Roman Catholics in the North.

If they are not true, then steps ought to have been taken to prevent any more vile propaganda of this sort being published; and more important still, the deceit of Sinn Fein propaganda should have been exposed in the English Press.

"During curfew hours, when only Crown forces had access to the streets," is a favourite expression of Sinn Fein propaganda when describing some nocturnal murder in Belfast. The reader is meant to infer that because the general public are denied access to the streets during curfew hours, and only the Crown forces have access,

that any murder committed during these hours must of necessity have been committed by the Crown forces. In reality most of the shooting done in Belfast during curfew hours is done by Sinn Fein gunmen from the windows and roofs of houses.

Unfortunate policemen on duty in the streets during curfew hours have been murdered by a shot fired from some house, probably from behind,

for fear that the policeman might see the flash and fire back or raid the house. And if the house is close to a Loyalist street, so best, as then there is always a possibility that the shot might have been fired by a Loyalist.

Further, Sinn Fein gunmen often lurk in dark passages at night to try and shoot Loyalists or policemen, always from behind, and then run for some I.R.A. lair.

VI. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SHIPYARDS.

During the late war with Germany the population of Ireland was divided into three parties—Loyalists, rebels, and neutrals.

The Loyalists made up for their lack of numbers by their enthusiastic and whole-hearted support of England and her cause. The rebels seized every opportunity of helping Germany and harming England which they could find or make, and incidentally were not too proud to make more money out of England than they had ever in their wildest dreams hoped to make in this world or any other. The neutrals—always a large party in Ireland, whose numbers fluctuate according to the fortunes of the contending parties—endeavoured to obtain a firm seat on the top of the fence and stay there. At the same time they never ceased trying to spot the winner—a favourite game in Ireland.

The shipyards of Belfast are as fine as any in the world, and when the war broke out the shipyard workers were loyal to a man. They are again now, for reasons which will be explained.

The call for fighting men found the shipyard workers willing and eager to fight for the Empire when her day of trouble came; and it is no exaggeration to say that every worker, if he had been allowed, would have chucked his well-paid job in the yards and fought in the trenches of France for a bob a day, and been proud of it.

Great men, in spite of all the mud the English Radical may throw at them. Rough they may be, as are most men who have to deal with rough work, but as true as the steel they work at and the ship they build. And when they fought to save England the English Radical had no fault

to find with them, but waited until he was out of the wood and the Ulsterman in trouble—the usual policy of the mean Radical.

So keen were these shipyard workers to fight for the Empire that nearly 10,000 were gone before the Admiralty woke up to the fact and stopped any more going.

The shipyard authorities were now faced with the problem of not only replacing the 10,000 men who had gone to fight for England, but also of finding many more in order that they might carry out the increased orders of the Admiralty to build ships for England—ships which were vital if the troops in France were to be fed and the Empire saved.

It was quite useless to look to England or Scotland for skilled shipyard workers—there only remained unskilled labour. In order to take in unskilled men a scheme of labour dilution was arranged, generously approved by the trades and labour unions.

Again it was useless to look to England, Scotland, or Ulster for these men—there only remained to fill the places of those who had responded to the call of King and country by taking men from the South and West of Ireland.

The wages were high and the working conditions most favourable. There followed a large incursion of stalwart young Celts from the South and West.

Probably the shipyard au-

thorities were most adverse to this peaceful penetration of Ulster from the South, but ships had to be built at any cost.

These men were Roman Catholics and most of them Sinn Feiners, and their ideals and outlook were strongly anti-English.

A short time before these men came North the anti-conscription campaign in the South had proved most successful; but they had been badly scared by the idea of being sent to the trenches in France, and felt sure that, once they were working on industrial work in the Belfast shipyards, their skins would be safe.

At first the new workers from the South kept quiet, but as soon as they felt that they were firmly installed in the shipyards, they proclaimed their Sinn Fein principles and took the offensive against the loyal workers.

News of German victories were openly cheered by these rebels, likewise the defeats of the Allies. The most bitter anti-English epithets, such as "To hell with England," were chalked in large letters on the sides of the ships which were being built for England.

And so they continued to the end of the war, growing bolder and more openly disloyal as time went on.

Thousands of the loyal shipyard workers who had volunteered at the beginning of the war never returned; those who

did found their jobs held by Sinn Fein rebels from the South, who boasted openly of their hatred of everything English.

We now come to 1920, when the murder campaign in the South was in full swing, successful, and unchecked. The Sinn Fein party had by now become a power in the land, and felt that they had the hated North at their mercy.

At the beginning of the war the Sinn Fein young men from the South had also flocked to the Derry shipyards, where they had filled the places of the loyal workers who had to fight as in Belfast, but to a greater extent.

Sinn Fein now determined on a bold stroke, and in July 1920 the Sinn Fein workers in the Derry yards drove out the remnant of the Protestant workers, severely beating many of them, and completely gained the upper hand there.

This outrageous treatment aroused fierce indignation amongst the loyal workers in the Belfast yards, and angry passions were further inflamed by the threats of Sinn Fein to mete out a similar fate to the Belfast loyal workers.

The climax came with the murder of Colonel Smyth, D.S.O. (a Banbridge man), in the County Club in Cork by I.R.A. gunmen, and the refusal of the Southern railway men to allow the brave soldier's body to be taken by train for burial in the North.

The rebels in the Belfast yards were then plainly told that they must either sign a pledge of loyalty to the King, and a declaration that they were not in sympathy with the Sinn Fein murder campaign, or get out.

The rebel workers refused to sign, and the loyal workers promptly pitched them out of the yards.

The expulsion of these rebels from the Belfast shipyards has been trumpeted broadcast for propaganda purposes throughout England and America.

Sinn Fein has wailed to the world that the brutal Belfast Protestants have turned the unfortunate Roman Catholics out of the shipyards in their blind hatred of Roman Catholics; but Sinn Fein always carefully avoids telling the world that these so-called "unfortunate Roman Catholics" were openly avowed rebels and enemies of the King. Nor do they say a word of the brutal way the Protestants were treated by the "unfortunate Roman Catholics" in the Derry shipyards.

Unfortunately many people in England and America believe what Sinn Fein has told them so often, and believe that the Protestant workers really did turn the Roman Catholics out simply from motives of bigotry and hate.

It was nothing of the sort, but simply the resolve of loyal men to have nothing to do with the King's enemies.

There never was any question of religion; and the proof is that there are still *loyal* Roman Catholic workers in the Belfast shipyards.

And if these expelled rebels had been loyal subjects of the King they could still be working in the yards, no matter what their religion might be.

Englishmen can hardly believe it possible that religion can be used for political propaganda purposes, but such is the policy of Sinn Fein.

Let English workers put themselves in the place of the

Belfast yard workers, remembering that these shipyards were built from mud slobbs by the grit, determination, and energy of the Ulster Loyalists, and say honestly what action they would have taken.

How would they have treated rebel workers in England—men who cheered English defeats and gloried in Boche victories?

There can only be one answer—they would have done the same as the loyal shipyard workers in Belfast did in 1920.

THE VOYAGE OF *THE MAID*.

BY G. H. GANDY.

I.

THE MAID was elderly, and had seen many years' service as a pilot cutter on the south-west coast of Ireland. For over thirty years she had been in the one place, in the respectable service of the Cork Harbour Commissioners, till one sad day a brand-new and larger boat came to take her place, and *The Maid* was laid up awaiting disposal. Her new owner wished her over in England, but so faithful was she to the dear old Emerald Isle that she opened a butt on the way across and was only with the greatest difficulty brought into Falmouth in a sinking condition. There she was repaired, and after various vicissitudes eventually found rest in a mud berth somewhere in the upper reaches of the Thames, where she lay dismasted, a prey to the curiosity of many small boys passing on their way to and from school. It was here that a 60-h.p. paraffin engine bought cheap from the Disposals Board was put into her, and such alterations as were required by a Board of Trade surveyor carried out.

On a fine July morning in 1921 *The Maid* was again afloat, and towed down river to the wharf, where she was

to be finally fitted out and loaded with a cargo for starving Russia.

At Greenwich the four individuals who were to accompany and control *The Maid* on her travels had plenty to do. The crew consisted of the Owner, the Skipper, Old Bill, and Jack. The Owner was shipping as engineer in charge of the 60-h.p. motor and also as supercargo, for the reason that, as well as being owner of the ship, he was also owner of the cargo—a valuable one consisting of several thousand pairs of boots, one motor-boat, and as much foodstuff as he could cram into the ship in addition.

Business at home being stagnant to a degree, he had turned to mysterious Russia as a possible field for enterprise.

The cargo he intended to take to Petrograd as a speculation in the style of the Merchant Adventurers of long ago.

Old Bill, a sailor-man of many years and many voyages, whose official age according to his discharge-book was only fifty-three, but who in strictest confidence would own to more nearly three score and ten, had been in charge of *The*

Maid ever since she left the service of the Commissioners of Cork. He knew her and loved her, having lived on board in the tiny fore-castle for nearly two years, and in spite of her many failings and idiosyncracies was inordinately proud of the little ship.

He and the Owner had boundless confidence in her capabilities.

A confidence secretly unshared by the Skipper, newly joined, who had never before sailed foreign in such a pigmy—*The Maid* was less than sixty feet long over all—and by Jack, the combined cook and able seaman, whose talk was all of 10,000-ton steamboats and their comforts. But seamen can't be choosers during a shipping slump, and Jack was glad to get a ship of any kind.

There was no lack of activity on board. By the aid of a crane the masts were stepped—*The Maid* was yawl-rigged—rigging set up, sails bent, running gear rove, and all the thousand and one things done which are required to fit a ship for sea after months of laying up. Charts, signal-flags, rockets, rope, paint arrived at the Skipper's order from the East India Dock Road; also a new compass to replace the battered relic already on the ship.

The problem of the compass is an instance of one of the many little difficulties of installation which were encountered and successfully surmounted.

The Maid was steered by means of a long iron tiller, which projected far too near the compass for the latter's health. Whenever the tiller was moved the compass moved in sympathy, which at sea would have caused the ship to follow a false and extremely serpentine course, if not perhaps a completely circular one like a kitten chasing its own tail. There was no alternative position for the compass, and it was highly inconvenient to cut down the length of the tiller. The knotty problem was resolved by placing the compass low, somewhere on a level with the steersman's shins, where the movement of the tiller caused only an inappreciable amount of deviation. Inappreciable for *The Maid*, that is. A quarter of a point is quite appreciable in some ships and not appreciated either.

Soon the ship was ready to load cargo. The boots were in large packing-cases, and it was soon evident that by no manner of human ingenuity could all these cases be fitted into the hold. The Owner forthwith gave the order to break up the cases and stow the boots loose. This was done, and the deck was piled high with broken packing-cases and loose boots. Space being of such importance, numbers of the boots were stowed in the after-cabin or engine-room, whichever you please to call it. True, the Owner and Skipper slept there, the one in a bunk and the

other in a hammock, and therefore the place deserved the name of cabin; but, on the other hand, most of the cabin space was taken up by the engine, and therefore quite reasonably might have been called the engine-room or machinery space.

At last all the boots had been stowed, and it was found possible to add a dozen bags of sugar and flour, and various cases of tea, chocolate, soap, and whisky before putting the hatches on. Then came the deck load, consisting of cases of corned-beef and ten steel barrels of paraffin for the engine, each weighing five hundredweight, and it became obvious that the problem of lashing the barrels, hoisting and securing the life-boat,

hoisting the 17-ft. motor-boat and securing it comfortably on a bed of corned-beef cases, would have to be put off and tackled on the next day.

And tackled with a will it was, so that some sort of order was evolved from the chaos on the deck, though very little of this latter was visible to walk on, much to Old Bill's disapproval.

"It's a shame to see *The Maid* all cluttered up with boats, boxes, and barrels on deck, just like a blooming bum-boat," said he.

From that moment he conceived a hatred of the heavy and superfluous motor-boat, which hatred was subsequently intensified every time he assisted in the laborious business of hoisting it in or out.

II.

In the afternoon when the tide turned, *The Maid* cast off before an appreciative audience of loafers and longshoremen.

Strange sounds came up the after-hatch from the Owner, but not a sign of a kick from the engine, so the Skipper hoisted forestaysail and mizzen, and proceeded to move slowly off down the river with the tide and the evening breeze.

"Where are you bound?" shouted one of the longshoremen.

"Roosha!" cried Bill as the ship drifted off.

"You'll never come back,"

came discouragingly over the water.

"Not if we had a Jonah like you aboard we shouldn't," roared the Skipper, who resented having aspersions cast on the safety of the ship of which he was in charge.

Soon the heavy mainsail was hoisted, and *The Maid* joined the stream of traffic going seaward down London river.

The engine, which had had a satisfactory half-hour's trial run the previous day, now for some unaccountable reason jibbed hopelessly and refused to start. After cranking desperately and adjusting and re-

adjusting everything possible, the Owner confessed himself temporarily beaten, and came on deck mopping his brow to enjoy the summer evening and the sight of the lower river.

Bill was steering when he emerged from the hatchway after his unsuccessful tussle with the engine.

"*The Maid* don't take kindly to an engine, nor never will. It's sailing she wants. Look how fine she's slipping along now with just this little drop of wind," said he.

She was sailing no better than she should, and in the light wind several barges were creeping upon her—but then Bill was always biassed in favour of *The Maid*. But he was perfectly right about the engine. As later events proved, *The Maid* must have cast a spell over it.

The Skipper had decided to drop down as far as possible past Gravesend with the tide, anchor for the night, and finally clear the river with the morning's ebb. Bill, who swore he knew the river like a book, was left at the tiller with instructions to sing out when the tide showed signs of easing and the ship stopped making good progress.

When next the Skipper came on deck the progress had certainly stopped, but curiously enough the tide was still running. A glance at the Lower Hope Light showed the reason. Bill had tried a short cut at the bottom of the ebb, and *The Maid* had quietly taken

the mud. This was not very serious, as in an hour the tide would be making and float her again. So the sails were lowered, the anchor let go, and all hands turned in snug till the morning.

The next day dawned bright and fine with a favourable light south-west wind, and *The Maid* cleared the mouth of the Thames, making three to four knots. By noon she was abreast the Edinburgh Light Vessel guarding the channel of that name, which is one of the principal gateways of the Thames. But *The Maid* was making for the Elbe and Kiel Canal, and had to make nothing before striking across to the eastward, so she continued up the Black Deep, running before the lightening breeze.

It was a perfect day, and, thanks to the bright sunlight and blue sky above, the usually drab-coloured estuary water shone blue as the open sea. There was too much heat-haze obscuring the distance to please an anxious navigator, and the breeze was too light for anything but a very lazy rate of progress; nevertheless, it was a day when, given a pipe and a sufficiency of tobacco to smoke or to chew, the seaman feels content and pleased above all landmen.

But the behaviour of the engine completely spoilt the Owner's enjoyment. Nothing would start it, and he spent the day below taking it to pieces, peering into its inmost

recesses, trying to probe the secret of its obstinacy.

At eight o'clock that evening the Sunk Light Vessel was reached, and *The Maid* headed E.N.E. across the North Sea; but she did not get far on her way, for the wind died away altogether, and she lay becalmed all that night and next day.

This gave the Owner and Skipper a good opportunity of overhauling the engine; but in spite of retiming (or because of it), and a great expenditure of energy on the starting-handle—and a 60-h.p. marine engine takes some starting by hand—all efforts were futile, and it was decided by two disgusted and perspiring individuals to do no more till Brunshüttel was reached, and the services of a motor expert could be obtained.

But if the calm continued thus, would that objective ever be attained? Two days out and motionless almost within sight of the English coast, with an obstinate auxiliary which did nothing but rouse the temper! One expects to be becalmed sometimes in a sailing ship, but to lie helpless as a log in the water when there is 60-h.p. available in the motor, *if only it would start*, is too exasperating for any vocabulary to do justice to.

The Owner chafed visibly while all the known tricks of raising a breeze were resorted to.

A large clasp-knife was stuck into the mast, and the wind was

whistled for in various types of melody, sacred and profane.

At last it came, a foul hard wind from the east. But at any rate *The Maid* was moving through the water again, though to the northward, as eastward was impossible. After a day of laborious tacking, the wind freshened considerably round about midnight and blew from the south, bowling the ship towards the Dutch coast at a good six and a half knots.

The Maid was lively, curtseying and bobbing to the seas in a skittish manner for so old a spinster, but, as Bill was careful to point out, she was a dry boat, and shipped few seas on deck. But a good deal of water was coming through her seams, and the pump had to be worked rather too frequently.

The seams of a wooden ship after lying up long out of the water take some time to tighten up, and that, coupled with the straining owing to the waves and the press of sail, soon kept one man pumping continuously as the wind freshened to a gale.

The day dawned wickedly with rain and a sky that promised dirt.

The Skipper had hoped to sight the Haaks Light Vessel off the Dutch coast for his whereabouts, but nothing could be seen through the rain but leaden clouds poised on a tumbling sea. So *The Maid*, forlorn in the grey waste, was put to run northward to round the Texel before turning eastward along the German coast.

She was certainly travelling

at a good speed well over eight knots, the pumps throwing a heavy stream of water at every roll.

If she did not ship a sea by the head one came in at the waist, to drench the steersman at the tiller. The decks were running water and leaking freely, so that there was not a dry spot in cabin or foc'sle. Jack managed to serve hot porridge for breakfast, but ensuing meals were hunks of bully and bread. No pot, pan, or kettle could be kept steady on the stove as *The Maid* banged drunkenly along.

With nine sea miles left astern in every hour after all the previous delays the Skipper was loth to shorten sail, but manifestly the time had come for reefing, or *The Maid* would drive and bury herself, so all hands were set to work to reef the mainsail. The extra strain of the reefing tackle was too much for the weather-beaten old canvas, and the seams began to run. There was nothing for it but to lower the mainsail in a hurry and continue running under forestaysail and mizzen, with the mainsail down and mainboom securely lashed amidships.

Then, to cheer the dripping oil-skinned crew on deck, sunlight shone through the clouds. It lighted up the wave tops, glistened in the rigging, and spirits rose wonderfully, though the gale still blew as strong as ever.

With the reduction of sail *The Maid* was doing a more

comfortable six knots going east, making straight for the Elbe, or so at least the Skipper hoped. For two days he had been running on a rough-and-ready reckoning, with not a sight of anything to verify his position.

Several steamers' lights were seen that night all going the same road as *The Maid*, which reassured the Skipper, and showed he was on the highway after all.

By morning the powerful light of Norderney flashed out, telling that *The Maid* had blown across as accurately as any steamboat.

It was clear that the Owner had not fully realised the conditions of such a voyage, firstly, from the fact that he had brought with him several sets of clean sheets—these were in use for the first few days, but were thereafter discarded for the warmer and drier bed of blankets—and secondly, from a short dialogue which occurred during this night.

The wind had moderated, but a heavy sea remained, and, relieved of the steadying effect of the mainsail, the ship rolled abominably.

The truck at the masthead gyrated drunkenly against the background of indigo cloud-swept sky. The middle watch found the Skipper at the tiller as the ship drove onward with the waves overtaking her from astern.

The Owner suddenly appeared on deck in a hurry.

"Put the ship on some other

course, Skipper. She'll roll the sticks out of her, and I can't sleep. I'm being banged from one side of my bunk to the other."

"It can't be done, sir. We're on the best possible course at present."

"But you must stop this rolling. You ought to be able to."

The Skipper replied emphatically that he could do some things, but that he was not one who could control the winds and waves.

The wind moderating to a fresh breeze in the morning, the big balloon jib was hoisted in the throat halliards in place of the damaged mainsail, and by afternoon *The Maid* arrived off No. 1 Light Vessel at the mouth of the Elbe, luckily at the right moment to catch the flood tide up. For now the wind died away, and the tide was all her motive power. It turned against her just after sunset, and the anchor was dropped two miles below Cuxhaven.

After a good night's rest Sunday morning was devoted to drying clothes and repairing the mainsail. Anchor was weighed in the afternoon, and with the gentlest of zephyrs the ship proceeded slowly up with the tide.

Off Cuxhaven the signal "Where are you bound?" was seen to be hoisted ashore,

but before any answering signal flags could be unearthed the Customs launch came alongside to make the inquiry.

The Skipper's German being of the pigeon variety, it was not immediately clear that owing to the deck cargo it would be necessary to put a Customs official on board to see that none was disposed of on the way up-river. Accordingly a benevolent-looking official, with an imposing beard and teutonic corporation, was embarked, and the ship was allowed to proceed. Father Christmas, as the passenger was nicknamed immediately, made himself generally useful, and was given the honour of standing at the tiller. With hardly a breath of wind and *The Maid* drifting like a dumb barge, this was not a very arduous or responsible position.

Next morning the ship drifted up abreast of Brunshüttel, the eastern entrance to the North Sea Baltic Canal, once called the Kaiser Wilhelm. Here a tug came out to take the ship through the lock at the entrance, and she was soon made fast in a snug berth, where she was boarded by an individual who spoke perfect English, offering himself as the ship's agent, ready to undertake any commissions with the greatest celerity and promising to have a party of engineers at work on the motor within an hour.

III.

Two days were spent at Brunshüttel while the engineers contended with the motor. Their first diagnosis of the trouble was "lack of beef on the starting-handle." Accordingly a colossal German mechanic was set to crank her up. He did his work thoroughly, perspiration exuding from every pore, but completely failed to gain a response from the engine.

The starting petrol must be stale, said the experts, and a fresh supply was obtained. Again the stout mechanic laboured at the handle, but with no result.

The Owner and Skipper had been watching the failure with secret satisfaction. As there now seemed some difference of opinion among the experts, while the mechanic was muttering to himself with patently desperate intentions, they proposed that the party should adjourn for a conference and a "gross bier" or so.

Comfortably ensconced at a café table, the Owner confessed that he had endeavoured to retune the engine himself, and perhaps it was just possible that in replacing some of the wheels some slight mistake might have been made. He also suggested that a larger-sized supply-pipe to the carburettor might be fitted.

With definite instructions to work on the party seemed much happier, and after a day of

great industry the engine was coaxed into life. Then after claiming and being paid a somewhat exorbitant bill the engineers left the ship in triumph, leaving the engine running as a proof of their handiwork. They had not been gone ten minutes when the engine got tired, and stopped dead just as the canal pilot stepped on board.

Fortunately it was restarted without much trouble, the clutch was put in gingerly, and *The Maid* proceeded out into the canal.

This was the first time *The Maid* had been propelled under power, and was in the nature of a full-power trial. The Owner had the alternative of taking a tow through the canal, which would have been cheaper than the expenditure of paraffin necessary to go through under power, but he rightly considered that the sheltered waters of the canal constituted an ideal place for a trial run.

The full-power trial was a heartbreaking business.

The canal is sixty-five miles long, and in that distance the motor stopped thirteen times, each time needing an average of half an hour's coaxing to get it going again. The ship took eighteen hours to do the distance. Thus the average speed of this full-power trial worked out to about three and a half miles an hour.

The engine sometimes stopped

from too much oil, sometimes from too little, sometimes for no reason at all; and it always misfired.

During one involuntary halt the Skipper stripped and dived down to the propeller to see if there might not be some obstruction there to account for the machinery's strange behaviour. But nothing was discovered.

The pilot was impatient for a quick passage in order to have a longer stay with his family before being required for another ship. His inquiries as to the wellbeing of the engine and the speed of the ship were frequent and anxious. The Skipper dared not look him in the face for shame, and soon his inquiries were badly received, and relations became strained in consequence.

Towards the end of the journey the Owner and Skipper slept exhausted in the engine-room, being wakened to their duties by the cessation of the din when the inevitable stop occurred. But all things come to an end, and Holtenau was reached at last in the early hours of the morning.

After the usual Customs formalities, at last a voluntary stop was made for a few hours' needed rest.

On the advice of the agent at Holtenau, where there is no export duty on spirits, eight cases of German rum were purchased very cheaply and concealed under the cabin floorboards. The contents were expected to be of use in oil-

ing the wheels of business in Russia.

At Holtenau, with the North Sea and Kiel Canal behind her, *The Maid*, after so many delays, had only accomplished four hundred and fifty miles in ten days.

Now, casting off and steering out of Kiel Fiord into the Baltic, she had another nine hundred miles to go before reaching her objective, Petrograd.

The Mine Chart and Sailing Directions showed the northern part of the Baltic and Gulf of Finland still supposed to be heavily mined, no superfluous energy having been expended by the various independent Baltic States in sweeping up these dangerous seeds of war, the theory being that each successive winter's ice would destroy more mines than any costly sweeping operations.

But the Admiralty Hydrographic Office takes no cognisance of such theories, and whole areas were coloured a warning rose colour on the chart, with safe narrow lanes running up the coasts to within a hundred miles from Petrograd, from thence onward being coloured a forbidding and Bolshevik red.

One learnt that Russian pilots prepared to conduct ships safely through this mine-field could be obtained at a certain Priemny Lightship station close to Narva in the Gulf of Finland.

The Maid drew over ten feet of water, so these warnings

could not be neglected, though from subsequent reports and observations it was found that sailing ships when unable to keep strictly to the safe tracks took their chance, and except in a few notoriously dangerous areas very seldom came to grief.

But the Board of Trade Notices to Mariners were emphatic in their instructions to follow the safe tracks, adding a special caution to navigators in the tideless Baltic on the subject of extraordinary cur-

rents and magnetic disturbances. In view of such instructions, the Skipper decided to take the route along the Swedish coast up past Stockholm, and then strike east along the Finnish coast past Hangö and Helsingfors to the aforesaid Priemny Light Vessel.

The tracks on this route were shown to be about five miles wide, and therefore more suitable for a sailing vessel than the narrower tracks along the coasts of the Southern Baltic States.

IV.

The weather was good with a fresh breeze, and a hundred and seventy miles had been accomplished in thirty-two hours when at dawn the ship passed the lighthouse on Sandhammer Point, the southernmost point of Sweden. Then the wind freshened to a half gale, and *The Maid* drove along with reefed mainsail and mizzen northward up the Swedish coast, and in the next twenty-four hours put a hundred and eighty more miles to her credit.

The ship had steered due north between the two large Swedish islands, Oland and Gotland, but, owing to thick weather and darkness, only a faint loom of their lights had been seen. When morning came the conditions were much the same as during the gale which had caught the ship in the North Sea, though the sea was not quite so severe, nor

did the ship leak quite so much. But in the afternoon, when taking a second reef in the mainsail, the old seams started again, and down the whole sail had to come.

The wind was heading to the north-west, and under the small sail area of mizzen and forestaysail it looked as if *The Maid* continuing on her northerly course would be unable to weather the small island of Gottska Sandö, and would be driven over the mine-field lying to the east of this island. Accordingly the ship was put about to run south-east for shelter in Kapelshamn Vik, an inlet on the north-west end of Gotland.

At 6 P.M. the Skipper in the main-rigging sighted the rugged coast of this island, hardly distinguishable among the low-lying black clouds on the horizon. Later on the weather cleared somewhat, and a help-

ful landmark, a conspicuous church spire on the skyline, was marked down. On approaching the rocky cliff-bound coast the engine was started to enable the ship to get into harbour before nightfall. But the engine behaved in its usual eccentric manner, and it was pitch dark night before the leading light into the Vik was picked up.

Scandinavian leading lights show a white beam over the safe channel into a harbour, and a red or green-coloured light over the water to be avoided. The progress up the bay was erratic, straight up correctly in the white beam while the engine kept running, then came the usual breakdown and a sagging away to leeward into the coloured beam till such time as the engine would be restarted.

At last the end of the bay was reached. Land was close on either hand, just seen through the darkness, when Bill, in charge of the hand lead, sang out that he had five fathoms, and anchor was let go.

Daylight showed *The Maid* anchored at the head of a pine-wooded bay, while abreast of her was a wooden pier and a few stone houses fronted by a collection of boats drawn up on the stony beach.

This was the village of Kapelshamn, and the red ensign was hoisted to show the inhabitants what sort of a ship had blown in on them during the night. Very shortly a boat was launched, and the Customs offi-

cer came on board. He spoke in broken English, and explained that when first he saw the red ensign fluttering at the masthead he mistook it for the Red Russian flag, and he feared that a Bolshevik crew had come to visit his peaceful village. Even after examining the ship's papers he must still have had lingering suspicions of *The Maid* as a Bolshevik or smuggling craft, for he politely but firmly forbade any one to land except under his own personal supervision. The Owner, who wished to lay in a stock of fresh eggs and bacon, went ashore with the officer, who took him round the village and introduced him to his family, then politely conveyed him back to the ship in the official boat.

Though thirty years at sea, this passage had greatly disturbed Jack's inside. He had managed to cook the meals for the remainder of the crew, but had been eating next to nothing himself, and was in a very weak state, visibly thinner than at the commencement of the voyage. In spite of frequent doses of the seaman's cure-all, his state had not improved. An ailing man in a small crew makes heavy work for the rest, but three days' rest at Kapelshamn repairing sails and caulking the decks while the gale was blowing itself out gave him a chance to recuperate.

On the second day there was company in the bay: a Swedish three-masted auxiliary schooner limped in for shelter. The cap-

tain had a tale of woe to relate. He had come from Uleaborg in the Gulf of Bothnia bound for London, had bad weather ever since leaving, and the last gale had carried away part of his deck load of timber and smashed both lifeboats. But what perturbed him most of all was the price he was to be charged at Kapelshamn for a new lifeboat before he would be allowed to proceed on his voyage.

On the third day at Kapelshamn, in the evening the wind dropped to a very light air from the south-west, and *The Maid* stole out of the bay. After losing three days at anchor, the Skipper decided to abandon the longer route *viâ* Stockholm, Hangö, and Helsingfors, and to cut across

to the eastward from Gotland to the island of Osel at the entrance to the Gulf of Riga, and from thence coast up the swept channels past Reval, and so to Narva and the Priemny Lightship.

The light air died away altogether during the night, so that next morning the motor was started, and, wonderful to relate, ran perfectly for seventy miles. On passing the Saruchaf Light Vessel course was altered to the northward to follow the safe channel.

Not long afterwards the motor decided that it had done more than its eight-hours day's work and stopped dead. It was left to its well-earned rest, and the ship lay becalmed for the night.

V.

With morning came a breeze from the east which sent *The Maid* along to the northward at about three knots, but later on the breeze freshened and headed from N.N.E., necessitating short tacks if the ship was to keep in the safe channel. Progress on the required course was thus very slow, and the Owner attempted to start the engine; but neither he nor it liked the short jerky motion of the ship in the rising breeze, so the attempt was abandoned, and the ship hove to for the night off the island of Dago. To heave to, the mainsail is lowered and the forestaysail or jib sheet hauled over to wind-

ward, so that the wind in that sail tends to drive the boat backwards while the wind in the mizzen sail is driving the boat forwards and up into the wind. Thus between the two sails the boat remains more or less stationary unless there is a very strong gale blowing, which will drive her bodily to leeward whatever course is adopted.

Hove to in this manner *The Maid* remained till morning, when the motor was induced to start, and she plugged away uncomfortably into the short head sea at an average rate of three knots.

There was considerable mist,

so that the coast was invisible, and only one spar buoy sticking up like a broomstick out of the water was seen. This was not surprising, as a note on the chart stated that most of these buoys marking the channel had drifted away and had not been replaced.

The ship was now steering east, having rounded Takhona Point, the northern point of the island of Dago, and was making for the lighthouse on the small island of Odensholm, which lies off Baltic Port. Progress was slow against head wind and sea, but the motor was behaving fairly well against this heavy load. When darkness came on the winking beam of Odensholm Lighthouse was seen right ahead, and by midnight the ship reached sheltered water close up almost in the shadow of the lighthouse, and dropped anchor.

No sooner was the anchor down and the motor running free with the clutch out than it stopped suddenly, this time for good and all.

It remained immovable, the front bearing seized up solid with the shaft. The oil supply to this bearing had never been neglected, so that the trouble was probably occasioned by some wrong alignment in the original installation of the motor. This had all the time caused undue friction in this particular bearing, and now explained the previous unsatisfactory running of the engine.

Nothing could be done to repair the breakdown, as to

do so necessitated removal of the fly-wheel, which was only possible if the engine-room bulk-head were removed; and in turn this operation could not be effected till the cargo, or at least some part of it, should be discharged.

So henceforward *The Maid* was to be a sailing ship once more.

Since leaving Greenwich she had covered nearly eleven hundred miles, out of which only two hundred had been accomplished under motor power, so the remaining distance of two hundred and fifty miles to Petrograd under sail seemed to present few difficulties.

The question as to whether the Russian pilot would take a sailing vessel from the Priemny Light Vessel through the eighty miles of mine-field to Kronstadt could only be answered on arrival at the lightship, and after a personal interview with the authorities concerned.

The next day at Odensholm was a Sunday, and almost a calm; what slight breeze there was came unfavourably from the east, and the ship rested patiently at anchor awaiting more favourable conditions. In the daylight there was seen to be a wreck of some small iron ship lying awash a few cables' length from the lighthouse.

This dangerous obstruction was not marked on the chart, and it was lucky for *The Maid* that in coming to an anchor in the darkness she had not run against its jagged and twisted frame.

In the small hours of the morning a favourable light air set in from the westward. *The Maid* weighed anchor and crept on very slowly towards Reval. Later on the breeze freshened a little and headed from S.E., but close-hauled *The Maid* held on her course. Guided by the splendid leading lights, she crept through the narrows into Reval Roads, and out past Wolf Island towards the isolated group of rocks called Kokskaarskär. Here the wind left her becalmed for another day. Then against the summer easterlies she crept along the Estonian coast in glorious weather, and two days later dropped anchor in Narva Roadstead.

The town of Narva and its suburb of Gungerburg used to be a favourite resort for holiday-makers from St Petersburg, and a large Casino stands very conspicuously together with the two lighthouses. Now it looked very deserted, though a party of bathers with their red-and-white-striped tents could be descried on the sand.

Narva is on the frontier between the newly-created Es-

thonian Republic and the Federated Socialist Free State of Russia.

At the battle of Narva the Estonians, thanks to their modern weapons supplied by the Entente, won a tremendous victory over a numerically far superior Bolshevik army, and Narva has remained the frontier town ever since.

Soon after our arrival a boat was seen to cross the bar pulling out to the ship. It proved to carry the chief pilot of the port, a crew of four brawny Estonians, and a batch of letters which had been awaiting the Owner. The pilot had little English, and could give no information as to the prospect of trade at Petrograd, barring repeated asseverations that the Bolsheviks were very bad people. He and his crew were grateful on being presented with a bottle of German rum, which they disposed of at once and pulled back to the shore much invigorated.

The night was spent at anchor in Narva Roadstead, and next morning *The Maid* bore away for the Priemny Light Vessel.

VI.

The masts of the *Priemny*, this outpost of Soviet Russia, were soon raised above the horizon, and the crew had plenty of time to observe the Light Vessel as *The Maid* tacked slowly towards her against the wind.

The Russian Lightship in the orthodox colours, red and white, with yellow funnel and "*Priemny*" in both Russian and Latin characters painted boldly on both sides, was equipped with wireless, and with a large

red flag fluttering over the stern.

Approaching, smoke was seen in the distance, and later on two German tramp steamers returning light from Petrograd came steaming down the channel. They paused at the Lightship to drop their pilots before continuing their way to the westward. This considerably reassured those on board *The Maid* as to their welcome in Russia, for if large steamers were trading thus it presupposed some kind of law and order there.

The Maid ran up close under the stem of the Light Vessel, with slatting canvas laid up into the wind, and hailed her in English for a pilot. Two or three heads appeared over the Light Vessel's bulwarks, a whistle was blown, and a motley crew tumbled down the ladder into their boat to bring the pilot alongside.

The latter was dressed in the universal pilot's garb of blue cloth and peaked cap, but had no collar, and his boots might have come off a dust-heap, while his face was cadaverous in the extreme. He gave the impression—as did many subsequent Russian acquaintances—that he would do anything for a square meal.

When he heard that the auxiliary motor was out of action he vetoed the possibility of sailing up the mine-field, and gave instructions to anchor while the Light Vessel wirelessly to Kronstadt for a tug.

The pilot descended into the cabin to take particulars of the ship's cargo, and gave the Owner and Skipper the benefit of his conversation for a few minutes. He was grateful for the gift of some tea and sugar, saying that his Government ration did not include such luxuries. He volunteered that a good many ships had been coming up with coal and grain, and that the Government pilots at the Lightship were kept busy; that everything was run by the Government in Russia, and everything was free, including such things as theatres, trams, and railways.

"Would the eighty miles tow up to Kronstadt be free?"

"Certainly," he replied, and this proved correct.

He was given a glass of rum, and was pressed to stay longer and talk, but seemed chary of keeping the boat waiting, and of giving offence to the captain of the Lightship by remaining, so returned to the *Priemny*, saying that the tug should be expected in the morning.

At 11 A.M. next day a powerful two-funnelled grey-painted tug, considerably larger than *The Maid*, appeared on the scene and took her in tow.

The officers of the tug were dressed in old naval uniform, and a few of the crew had the regulation naval jumper and trousers, but the majority wore any old odds and ends, the most popular combination being deck trousers with a coloured football jersey.

When out of sight of the Light Vessel, the tug slowed down and stopped, and as *The Maid* ranged up alongside, one of the tug's crew, a good-looking young seaman, jumped across. He produced a handful of silver roubles, and intimated in pantomime that the crew would be glad to buy liquid refreshment, the outcome being that for thirty silver roubles and a collection of gold rings a case of rum was passed along the tow-rope to the tug. She then went ahead, while the crew settled down to drink like thirsty men in a desert.

At nightfall the two ships anchored five miles S.S.W. from Seskar Light, as the mine-field could not be traversed in darkness.

In the middle of the night the Skipper was startled from slumber by the noise of powerful internal combustion engines close alongside, and on going on deck he descried the wicked-looking shape of a large and powerful armed submarine ranging up alongside in the darkness. He hailed her, and with relief heard the answering hail, "Englishman, can we buy some tea?"

The submarine came alongside. A light was switched on, showing two officers on the conning-tower, and the remainder of the crew grouped on the superstructure forward. They did not look the cut-throat crew one might have expected of a Red submarine; the officers in particular looked quite respectable young men.

They were much disappointed to hear there was very little tea for disposal. They were offered rum instead, which was refused as being strictly forbidden in Russia, now a dry country. This was news indeed, and explained the behaviour of the crew of the tug. Eventually, with protestations of regret on both sides, the submarine was presented with a cupful of tea and steered off into the night.

Early the next morning anchor was weighed, and now the tug made a better pace, which brought her into sight of the Kronstadt Forts before noon.

It was a beautiful day, and the sun glittered resplendently on the golden dome of the church at Kronstadt. "Russian gold!" exclaimed the Owner as he gazed upon it.

Arrived off the entrance to Kronstadt Dock there was some delay and a good deal of signalling. This seemed to bewilder those in charge of the tug, for she ran aground on a sandbank, and willy-nilly drew *The Maid* after her.

There the two ships lay helpless within a few hundred yards of the dock entrance, but the accident caused little commotion either aboard the tug or ashore, so those in *The Maid* also accepted it in the philosophic spirit, copied the example of the tug crew, and went to dinner.

Help came soon afterwards in the shape of two small tugs, which soon shifted *The Maid*,

brought her in, and moored her safely to a buoy in the dock.

These tugs were nicely handled, being in charge of no less a personage than the Harbour-master of Kronstadt himself.

After mooring he came on board *The Maid* to see the ship's papers; and on being complimented and thanked for getting her off so efficiently, he explained that the big tug was no good as it was manned by ex-Imperial Navy men. He himself was a Merchant Service man, an ex-bo'sun, had even sailed some time in English ships, and knew a bit more seamanship than to run on a sandbank just outside the dock.

"Well, you have a good job here, Harbour-master; more pay than a bos'un, I suppose," said the Owner.

"More work but less pay," said he. "I've got plenty of work and no assistance. I'm Harbour-master because I'm a seaman and know a good many foreign languages, but I get just the same pay as one of the ordinary seamen under me."

"Well, what d'you think of that; d'you like it?"

"Oh yes, I don't mind it. That's our principle in Russia now, and I work pretty hard too, especially now the number of ships coming up here is on the increase."

"Well, you'll get your reward later on when trade opens up a bit more," said the

Skipper; "there'll be plenty of little commissions then, don't you think."

"That's as it may be," said the Harbour-master with a twinkle in his eye. "There was far too much of that sort of thing in the old days here, but, you understand, I'm quite contented to work hard as things are at present."

"What's it like up at Petrograd now? D'you think they want boots up there, and can people pay any sort of cash to us?"

"Well, now, that's a question you'll have to find out the answer to yourselves. You see my boots: they look like Englishmen's, perhaps from Archangel. I'm one of the lucky ones. I got a pair of these regulation boots from the old Seamen's Union not so long ago, but there are plenty of other people wanting boots badly. As to paying, that's another thing. Besides, I don't expect you'll be allowed to sell to individuals; you'll probably have all your boots bought by the Government. Here's luck," said the Harbour-master, "and here's to a speedy sale when you arrive at Petrograd. The tug will be ready to take you up to-morrow morning."

Thus cheered by the Harbour-master, the day was spent waiting in Kronstadt Dock. No one was allowed ashore, as pratique had not been issued, nor had there been any Custom examination, but the day was considerably shortened by put-

ting the clock on three hours from sun time to Russian time. What would some of our farmers at home say to three hours' daylight saving as is practised in Russia now.

Next morning a small tug piled high with wood billets for fuel came to take *The Maid* the remaining distance to Petrograd.

The gilded spires and domes of the city could be seen far in the distance on the clear summer air; on approaching they were lost to sight as *The Maid* did not make directly for the Neva mouth, but entered the deep-dredged canal that leads obliquely to the docks at the mouth of the river.

Here along the banks were seen various small craft laid up out of the water, and tied up to the desolate wharves several large but ill-kept steamers of Russia's laid-up Merchant Marine.

In one basin opening off the canal, among an assortment of old ships and obsolete gunboats, was the great two-funnelled ex-Imperial yacht. Then came the basin where the berth had been arranged for the little Irish pilot cutter after her fourteen hundred miles' journey. Here several foreign steamers were lying, and away over in the distance waved the familiar red ensign of an English collier. No sooner had *The Maid* been secured alongside the dock than she was invaded by an army of officials, including a sentry fully

equipped with rifle and fixed bayonet.

All except the latter crowded down into the small cabin, and, crouching and twisting to avoid the deck beams and the engine, in a marvellous way all found seats and proceeded to make themselves at home. Not one of the visitors could talk English, only one talked French, and one German, so conversation between members of the conference was a matter of much interpretation.

Knowing of the strict dry laws in Russia, the Skipper felt somewhat diffident in administering the usual captain's hospitality, but, looking round and seeing the look of expectation on every face, he decided this law was as good at Petrograd as in every other port in the world, so produced his bottle from the locker. What was one among so many! That bottle was soon a dead man, and in high good humour the party were drinking from tin mugs and munching hard ship's biscuits with evident satisfaction.

The crowd seemed so hungry that the Owner produced two tins of corned beef, which were opened and passed round from hand to hand, each man digging out his share with a pocket-knife.

Meanwhile the Skipper signed his declarations as to cargo and spirits on board, and had his small vest-pocket camera sealed up with four tremendous sized lead seals. The individual

whose duty it was to fix the Soviet Seal, a bearded ancient with large horn-rimmed spectacles, together with the doctor, accompanied the Skipper on a tour round the little ship.

The doctor, after examining the tongues of Bill and Jack—an indignity they did not relish—decided that the crew were healthy and gave the necessary certificate, while the ancient Customs officer proceeded to affix large seals to the various cases of spirit, a quite useless proceeding, as the contents could be got rid of privately at any time so long as the case and its seals were destroyed without trace. He had lived a long time, and the official was no doubt well aware of this, but it did not detract from the

deliberation and solemnity of his proceedings.

All formalities having been completed, there was no excuse for the deputation of welcome to remain longer. Accordingly it dispersed gradually, leaving one official called the Control on board as a permanency.

The duty of the Control, who was assisted by the armed sentry, was to see that no goods were landed, sold, or given away to unauthorised persons. Strictly speaking, nothing could be taken ashore by any of the crew, not even a small piece of soap. But the Control was only human, and the rules became more elastic after this official and his armed helper had been regaled with a good dinner.

(To be continued.)

THE DAILY ROUND.

THE KHILÁFAT AGITATOR.

So far as India cared, the Treaty of Sèvres could have been ratified and enforced in 1919 and hardly a whisper of protest would have been raised. A nervous Government bade its officers sound Mahomedan opinion regarding the anticipated terms of peace, and it was at once manifest that the great bulk of the Mahomedan peasantry neither understood the veiled inquiries nor cared what might happen to Turkey's revolted provinces. Perhaps it was this display of nervousness which watered the ground, in which a natural sympathy with the Turks as fellow Mahomedans was already growing, and gave the political agitators the opportunity of sowing that crop of thorns which have overgrown the original good grain and yielded only a mass of outrageous and arrogant demands.

There has seldom been a more impudent claim than that of the Khiláfat agitators of India to be allowed a voice in the disposal of the fragments of the Turkish Empire. They do not even propose a settlement which would apply to existing facts, but wish to put the clock back to 1914, and to pretend that the Turkish provinces have not revolted, and that the guardianship of the holy places of Islam can still

be restored to the Sultan. Their demands are not those of the Turks themselves, who care far more for the establishment of Turkish control in Smyrna, Thrace, and the Straits than for the reinvestiture of the Sultan with the attributes which must be found in the Khalifa of Islam.

The favour shown to Jews in Palestine may be the fruit of an imprudent promise and a fantastic experiment, but there is even less reason for again putting Jerusalem under the Turk than under Sir Herbert Samuel. The relations of the Angora Government to the puppet Sultan at Constantinople may be as ambiguous as the relations between the unfettered republicans and the treaty-bound Free Staters in Ireland, but neither the Sultan nor Mustapha Kemal Pasha would thank his Indian friends for the gift of suzerainty over Mecca and Medina. King Faisal may be a patriotic statesman in the eyes of the British, and an intriguing schemer in the opinion of the French, but neither English nor French could hand back Baghdad to the Khalifa in order to please the Indian agitators.

The whole Eastern question is a seething mass of conflicting policies, broken promises, futile ideals, and national and personal jealousies; but it is

quite certain that all these confusions can be straightened out only if attention is kept fixed on the conditions and rights of each locality and each nation, and no more weight is allowed to representations of what is called Indian Mahomedan opinion than that opinion is worth, which is almost nothing at all. No settlement which may be reached will quiet them, because the motive behind them is not to help the Turk or the Khalifa in Europe, but to use a convenient stick to wound the British in India.

Ex uno discite omnes. There were in an important city of the Punjab two brothers. They were Syuds by descent from the Prophet, and so respected in the Mahomedan community, and barristers who had eaten their dinners in the Temple, and so knew a little of the world outside India; but neither of them had many brains nor a good practice at the Bar. In April 1919 Hindu-Mahomedan unity was the favourite political tune. It was a pretty and simple tune, an essay in harmony, which would serve well as an overture to the combined chorus of anti-British racialism. The overture needed many rehearsals, as the various parts had hitherto been accustomed to different scales, and it was very difficult to get them to sing together. The elder of the two brothers was persuaded by the local Hindu Congress party to join their concert, and become Secretary of the district Congress

Committee. He was the only Mahomedan on the Committee, and he was a tool, not a leader. His presence on the Committee was, however, proclaimed as the outward and visible sign of the union of hearts in hate. The only other visible sign of the unity was that, when the enthusiastic flag-waving processions through the city were overcome by the heat, the Hindus stood the Mahomedans drinks and the Mahomedans the Hindus.

A few days later, when General Dyer had shown that open sedition and anti-British demonstrations would not be tolerated, the Secretary resigned his secretaryship and apologised to the district magistrate for having been led astray by the insidious Hindus. He promised to keep out of Congress agitation for the future; but naturally broke his promise soon after, when the British Government performed its well-known *volte-face* trick, let out the revolutionaries, and let down Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer.

Later on by some months, before the agitation about the Khilâfat and the guardianship of the Moslem holy places had begun, the district magistrate sent for the younger brother among other Mahomedans, talked to him about the anticipated terms of peace with Turkey, and asked him who would be Khalifa if the Sultan's overlordship in Mecca, Jerusalem, and Baghdad ceased as a necessary result of the deliver-

ance of the Arabs of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Arabia from the Turkish yoke, and what he and other Mahomedans would feel in the matter. With no hesitation the young man replied that personally, as he was a Syud, he would much rather see his fellow Syud, the Sharif of Mecca, recognised as Khalifa than a conquered and humiliated Sultan. He frankly took little interest in the Khiláfat question, and had no sympathy whatever with the Sultan as a religious head. Yet six months later this young man became President of the local Khiláfat Committee. He has doubtless ever since been declaiming with well-assumed indignation of the wrongs of Islam. The mouth was his, but the strings were pulled by Gandhi and his friends. He and the other puppets like him seem to have collapsed since Gandhi was imprisoned and the master's hand removed.

The Khiláfat agitation was never a spontaneous expression of Mahomedan sentiment, still

less a fanatical outburst of outraged religious feeling. It was only the Mahomedan contribution to the unity chorus of hatred of Britain, organised and stage-managed by the Hindus. The Hindus fermented the lukewarm Mahomedan sympathy with the Turks, till it really became an imagination that a like calamity might befall themselves, and misrepresented as oppression by the British what was the inevitable result of the victory of the allies. During the months when the agitation was being worked up in our city, it was a Hindu barrister who presided at the Khiláfat meetings, and it was Hindu agitators who came to address the meetings. The leading Mahomedans held aloof, and the Hindu leaders did all they could to discredit them in the eyes of their followers, and even to oust them from their incumbencies in the Mosques, and have their offices given to others who would more readily subordinate religion to politics.

THE VILLAGE POND.

In the days when agitation in India was only simmering and had not yet declared itself as a demand by the lawyers and other educated townsmen for the loaves and fishes of office, and when the cry of "India for the Indians" was still not seen to be equivalent to "all India for a few Indians," the advanced party used to

cloak their personal ambitions and posture as the champions of social reform and progress. It was necessary, they thought, to camouflage the hideous idolatry, the gross sexual immorality, arising from child marriages and early widowhood, and the cruel slavery of the outcastes, if India was to claim to be fit to be received into the

comity of civilised countries. How could a people, whose widows were mostly prostitutes, as is shown by the use of the same word—*randi*—for both widow and prostitute, and of which one-sixth were regarded as so far out of the pale of humanity that their very presence brought pollution on honest folk, claim the right of self-government? Platform and press echoed one another in condemning these social abuses, and in advocating free and compulsory education and village sanitation. The philosopher in his arm-chair might well admire these high ideals of the great leaders of Indian opinion; but then he would be unaware that the people who professed these beautiful ideals were not leaders, but windbags bursting with jealousy of the prosperity of their brothers, the Indian peasantry, and that there was no Indian public opinion to lead. He would not be able to pierce through the disingenuous mist of words and see that these lawyers too, like those of old, wished to lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, but themselves would not touch the burdens with one of their fingers.

But now it is all clear, and even the pretence of a desire for social reform has been thrown aside. As an Indian newspaper says:—"It is remarkable that ever since politics became the all-absorbing passion of Indian leaders, social reform in the practical sense

of the term has fallen into the background." India has been made a member of the League of Nations notwithstanding her slaves, her immoralities, and her idolatry, and so has achieved respectability without any washing of her dirty linen.

The other matters are too grave for us, but village sanitation centres round the village pond, and it is as easy to talk and declaim about this as it is difficult to do anything practical to clean it.

An ordinary Punjab village is a collection of mud huts with one or two wells, often brackish, built on a dead level plain, so that no drainage is possible, even if water were available, and a pond. The pond is the hub of village life. It is usually small, and during the long dry months grows gradually smaller, slimier, muddier, and more evil smelling, till it disappears altogether. When the rains come the pond fills up, but does not become much cleaner, for the storm water from the village lanes carries with it to the pond the accumulated filth of months. From daylight to nightfall it is in use. Very early in the morning men and women go to the fields for the purposes of nature, and on their way back wash in the pond. In the morning the village herd of cattle, which is seldom free from foot-and-mouth disease, wade into the pond and drink before standing in the burning grassless fields throughout the day. Then the women bring

down their cooking-pots, and they too are washed in the pond. After them comes the washerman with the dirty clothes. Mud is dug from a corner for making unburnt bricks. In the heat of the day the buffaloes wallow in the mud, with nothing but their evil white eyes to be seen above the water. Sometimes hemp is retted in a corner, and then the smell carries one back to the flax-fields of Co. Down. If there is no more sacred water near, the corpses of the village dead are burned hard by the edge of the water.

Far be it from me to defend the village pond as a wholesome institution; the sanitary professor would fill it up or filter it at once. But a sanitary pond would be a useless pond, nor are the villagers prepared to give up their pond without a substitute. It would have needed a good many policemen to drive the peasant's children to school under a law for compulsory education; but interference with his daily habits and his pond would have roused even stronger resentment in the hearts of the Punjab peasants.

The Punjab Government, ever deferential to agitation by a minority, once drew up a model set of sanitary rules about providing parapets to wells, keeping manure-heaps outside the village site, and so on, but they were too wise to legislate about the pond. Breaches of the rules were to

be punished by small fines to be paid into the common village fund, out of which wandering beggars are fed and the palms of subordinate officials greased. The rules could be adopted by any village if two-thirds of the residents were in favour of them. It is doubtful if any village at all out of the tens of thousands in the Punjab has adopted and worked the rules. So village sanitation was hardly a democratic cry.

But in India so many things are done upside down: we read from right to left; we beckon to a friend to come to us with the palm turned away; we sew with the needle pointed away from us; our saw's teeth are reversed; so perhaps democracy, too, is topsy-turvy. We read of the "democratic basis" in the reformed constitution of India. But the "basis" seems to be the point of an inverted pyramid balancing dangerously on an electorate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the population, out of whom less than 1 per cent actually vote. It is not unlikely to topple over and crash on its builders if they try to prop it up or repair it.

There is quite a big Sanitary department in every province of India, topped by a Sanitary Engineer and a Sanitary Commissioner, who is a member of the I.M.S. and can write D.P.H. after his name. They are very clever at statistics, but their chief duty is to draw up projects for drainage and water supply. In the old days these schemes used to drag along

from year to year even to a decade, and be constantly revised as the population increased and wanted more water, and as market prices of labour and materials fluctuated, but they were seldom carried out. This was because there was little money available, and the estimates had always to be very high so as to allow every subordinate his pickings, from the Assistant Engineer down through all the official hierarchy, to whom the successful contractor would have to show his gratitude for favours received. Since sanitation has come under

the vote of Indian Councils and the control of Indian Ministers, there is no money at all, and the Sanitary departments are deprived even of the occupation of preparing projects. Like other scientific departments, they will doubtless soon be abolished as racial insults. In the meantime they still draw their pay; but it is an expensive form of eyewash to use in order to enable India to pose as a civilised country. The ponds, however, are even now safe from that disturbing and incomprehensible British efficiency.

COUNCILS WHICH CANNOT CONSULT.

In an article in the Allahabad 'Pioneer' on the Montagu-Chelmsford report, written in October 1918, when the Indian reforms were still in embryo, there appeared the following wise remark: "If the new Councils are to include representatives of all classes, many of whom will be almost dumb even in their mother tongue, it will be essential in order to prevent the exclusive domination of the Councils falling into the hands of the English-knowing lawyer class that all speech and all papers should be in some vernacular tongue. This is not a matter of detail, but a necessary precaution against oligarchy."

The prophecy has been fulfilled and the oligarchy established. The politicians had their way, and English is the

language of the Councils, though the majority of members are ignorant of it. If the use of the vernacular might have caused some little initial trouble in such provinces as Bombay and Madras, where Urdu, Marathi, Gujrati, Telegu, and Tamil are each spoken by large numbers, the old story of the Tower of Babel surely teaches the truth that a democratic state is possible only when there is a community of tongue. Though the work on the tower was only manual labour and best done in silence, they had to leave off the building, because they did not understand one another's speech. When the work itself is TALK and very little else, how can it go on in a confusion of tongues? It is no remedy to secure a common speech by adopting a tongue foreign to

almost all, as English is. If the educated classes really desire to build a tower of democracy, surely they might at least be required to learn the vernacular of their fellow-members and voters, and not be allowed to secure the monopoly of affairs by virtue of linguistic skill in English. There is only this to be said, that if all talk were in vernacular, those Councils which have Indian presidents would be scarcely less noisy than the parrot-houses in the Zoo, where every cockatoo screeches at once—and even more confusing.

There is a dear old Mahomedan member of the Punjab Council, a village headman who has always taken much interest in his wheat and his village school, but whose horizon is, as of most of his fellows, limited to these. There are many members of Council like him. There are others whose horizons are still more limited. In one Council a greasy sweetmeat seller is a member, and his most intellectual occupation hitherto has been to squat in his booth in the bazaar and flick flies with a switch off the piles of sticky sweets around him; in another Council is a barber member, who would be more at home doing his morning round of shaving chins and cutting hair with his leather bag of razors and scissors on his back and his tin water-boiler in his hand.

Here is what the old Mahomedan said in an early meet-

ing of the Punjab Council: "All speeches should be delivered in Urdu. It is true that he did not know English, but that was no reason why he should not be enabled to intelligently follow the proceedings. Otherwise his coming to the Council was useless and ridiculous. When he would go back to his village and the people asked him what he had seen or heard in the Council, what reply would he be able to make?" And in a later meeting of the Council he again "complained of his isolation, and said that he and his companion were the only two real representatives of the agriculturists. All others were lawyers, against whom he could not venture to speak. He was completely at sea. The proposed expenditure was demanded in the interest of the Urbans. They put a demand before the house, and stood to vote for it, and carried the motion. He could not speak there, because he was beset by lawyers on every side. A farmer could not speak in such an assembly, or if he dared to speak nobody would pay attention to him. Small men were not given a hearing in the Council or outside it. Through their personal influence two or three agriculturists got passed into Council, and the Government should ask them about the real condition of agriculturists. He was sorry that nobody disclosed the real condition of the agriculturists."

In the Bombay Council a

Mahratha member asked a question in his vernacular, as he could not speak English. The President gravely ruled that it was nobody's fault if a member had not learned English, and as a matter of grace allowed him to put his question. Apparently this poor man, having asked his one question, must thenceforth for three years remain mute and un-understanding through all the weary sessions.

In some Councils the exclusive use of English has been found unworkable, and even Englishmen have been allowed to speak in the vernacular. In

the Punjab each speech, after it has been delivered in Urdu, is repeated by a translator in English, which wastes time and is deadly dull. In the Central Provinces movers of resolutions and members of the Government are allowed to summarise their arguments in the vernacular at the close of their English speeches, but only members ignorant of English are allowed to address the Council in Hindi. But none of these makeshifts secures for the 80 per cent of the population, who live on the land and do not know English, any adequate representation.

UNDER THE PYRENEES.

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

"In railway travelling," a Frenchman observed to me, "one sees a great deal of life." He was a *commis voyageur*. I believed at first that he was thinking of his fellow-travellers, but he spoke of glimpses from the window, of things seen in roads and fields and gardens, and sometimes in the upper storeys of houses, "like a paragraph in a feuilleton without the context: one builds little stories round them."

It had not struck me before, though I manœuvre for a corner seat in a railway carriage as much out of curiosity as for comfort, and am never tired of looking out of the window.

In a railway carriage a map can be more inspiring than a romance, especially a map of France, with its score of countries and its two or three peoples. Through the windows one sees repeated the haunting and suggestive names of places, glimpses which confirm the features one has given them, or which strip them of false associations. My companion and I had taken the Marseilles-Bordeaux express, and were going to wait for the spring somewhere in the Basses-Pyrénées. It was all new country after Nîmes, and we left it to impulse where to break the journey. Arles, Tarascon, Beaucaille were familiar. Arles, the

first place one stayed at in France. Tarascon. No, it was not Tartarin who drew one there that one remembered, so much as grotesqueness rendered lovable and even dignified in one's cocher's figure. One understood one's cocher's figure after a few meals in Provence. Montpellier brought to mind Smollett in his coach; or was it Sterne, or both? Cette. We had thought of stopping at Cette. A quaint name for a place. There was something one remembered about Cette, though one hadn't been there. We looked out on to salt marshes with a thin embankment between lake and sea, and a steamer which looked as if it had been stranded in a deserted marsh a few yards from the train. Then we saw barges in a lock, and remembered that it was the Mediterranean port for the Canal du Midi. Then Béziers, and the next stop was Narbonne. How often had one gazed at the magic name on the map, ancient Roman port and modern Hymettus, which supplies Europe with honey. Honey meant legions of bees, and bees flowers innumerable, warmth and fragrance, and sunny pastures. Our suit-cases were off the rack as we steamed into Narbonne. But we put them up again. Narbonne looked too bare and

parched and treeless. There might be thyme on the hills, but one would never think of the place again as a metropolis of bees or an emporium of honey.

A rich vineyard country all the way from Nîmes to Castelnaudary. Even in the salt marshes around Cette the vines thrive with their roots in the brine. Too much of the Riviera, perhaps, until one turns west from Narbonne, too many olives and cypresses. Away from the sea the heart of Languedoc recalled Michelet's picture of France at the beginning of his history. "France is a person," and Languedoc, as some one said, is France *en résumé*. Scattered white towns and villages snug in the folds of the hills, and the billowy plain that lies between the ribs of the Cevennes and the Pyrenees. A rich and rolling country. The kind of picture that is called up in the mind's eye when one hears the word Duchy. A Duchy should be spacious and fertile, with uplands and lowlands and points of strength seen across wide horizons. The smile of feudalism should survive on the face of the country, a feudalism conquered, forgiven, adopted, one might say, by a democracy that in the range of its spirit and in its military glory has proved itself even more romantic.

Picturing and peopling the ideal Duchy I fell asleep, and when I woke up I opened my eyes on the reality, the citadel on a hill with its fifty towers, in which the history of France

is written in stone. It was growing dark, and the towers and bastions seemed to fill the whole horizon, pricking the sky wherever there was light between the plane-trees. A magnificent stage-curtain, whether to a dream or reality. The train was drawing into Carcassone.

It was at Carcassone, of course, that we broke our journey, and had our first distant glimpse of the Pyrenees from the citadel. Beyond Carcassone the real vine country comes to an end soon after one passes west of Bram, and one enters a rich corn country. The bullock here replaces the horse. At Castelnaudary we saw a team of four oxen to the plough. After this, until one has left Toulouse behind and is approaching Boussens and the foot of the mountains, the country is a little monotonous. Coming from Marseilles one gets the view which was familiar to the Romans when their legionaries tramped the road from Narbonne to Toulouse and Dax—not so impressive perhaps as the slow approach to the Pyrenees through the Landes described by so many travellers in the old days, when hour after hour the snow-capped range became more distinct "over a vast sheet of dark-green forest stretching like a sea to the roots of the mountains."

Tarbes was the first spot from which we had a clear view of the grand massif of the Pic du Midi, a lovely, homely, undulating plain, hedges, pasture-

land, woods, and valleys, which, with the Pyrenees behind, the wild merging into the pastoral, gives one the impression of an Alpine Devonshire.

It was market day, the last Thursday before Christmas, and the streets black with the peasantry of the Pyrenees. Tall, gaunt, clean-shaven, hawk-like men, walking in front of their carts with long hazel-sticks on their shoulders, or carried erect in front of them, their bullocks following behind. A rather dour and by no means cheerful-looking crowd, folk who looked as if they had weathered and suffered a good deal. They came in on foot, or in small carts drawn by donkeys, or mules with enormous ears. Nearly every peasant had his wife by his side, and the women without exception wore black. There was not one who appeared to have given any care to her looks or her dress or her figure, as if clothes existed for warmth or decency only; the accepted shift for a bonnet or hat was a plain black handkerchief tied about the head.

The cattle looked more cared for in their light, clean, white or grey blankets and coiffure of sheep's skin, yoked in pairs to the carts, gentle-eyed, buff-coloured, and moving in perfect step. The carts they drew carried pigs or calves to the market. There was the little *charrette* balanced on two low wheels, occupied by a single oscillating sow; and four-wheeled boarded waggons with a dozen calves in them, not

tied by the feet and thrown in a bundle on the boards as in Brittany, but standing in rows, rump to rump, and looking out gravely on the street. There were *curés* among the peasants—one saw two and sometimes three in a cart,—laughing and chatting with a vivacity unknown to their preoccupied flock.

Everywhere an appearance of poverty and thrift. Market women with their whole stock-in-trade laid out on the cobbles, a few bundles of leeks, or an apron full of broad-beans, walnuts, chestnuts, or maize; sprigs of mistletoe for sale, which would be carried home with a sou's worth of sweets or biscuits for the *gosses*.

From early in the morning until near midday the procession filed to the market through the Rue de Maréchal Foch—a scene familiar to the eyes of the Generalissimo of the Allied Armies. For Foch was born in this small provincial town at the foot of the Pyrenees.

No vain labouring of the mountains is memorised in the tablet inscribed in gilt letters on the modest house with the four windows, now a boulangerie, at the corner of the Rue de la Victoire. Foch has exalted more than the Pyrenees. One would imagine that it was enough to lend a positive consciousness of pride to the people of Tarbes, even to alter their appearance or gait, but the boy at the inn who was sent to direct me to the house had to call at a chemist's to ask the way. I wanted to picture

the young Foch in Tarbes. In his life I thought I might find letters or reminiscences which might associate him somehow with the scene. He might have derived some *pli* from Tarbes, as Renan from Treguier, even if he had left none behind, but at book-shops I could find no help. Apparently no biography of the Maréchal had reached the town. Théophile Gautier, the other celebrity of Tarbes, was represented on the shelves, but he had had time to sink in.

In one of the *librairies* I encountered a thin and weathered old peasant woman with a wart on her nose and a more than incipient beard, attracted by the gilt and tinsel of the *gerbes* displayed in the window, as the moth by the star. I fancied that she was one of the market women I had seen with her wares on the cobbles, though it was an odd place for her to choose to spend the profits of an apronful of leeks. She was trying to cajole the young woman behind the counter, who had no soft place in her heart for the old lady's spiritual needs. The *gerbes* were 2 fr. 50 each; she wanted five of them, and was voluble about a reduction. What fastings and privations, what hours of exposure in the wet and stony market-place, for weeks and perhaps for months of the year, this outlay at Noël involved it would be depressing to conceive. But the young woman's heart was stonier than the cobbles.

She would not reduce the

price of the *gerbes* by a sou.

The old woman was fingering and feeling the fronds of one of them, holding it out and looking at it as if it were a child. But the young woman took it from her and sternly restored it to the box with a gesture of impatient finality. At this the old lady floated to the door with a sideways list, as if the upper half of her were insecurely attached to the base, but was soon drawn back again into the middle of the shop by the passion for possession. One could see that her soul could have no peace until she had laid the gawds of the spirit on the altar. In colour they were certainly attractive, these brittle flowers in two shades of gold, daisies of kinds, bound up with tinselled grasses that glittered like dew in the sun, or jewels. She stood quite still and silent for a moment; then, as if some impediment had been removed, she began to argue half pleadingly with the unrehearsed eloquence of inspiration. One would expect the croak of a raven from her, but her voice was caressing. "But, madame, a reduction of only 50 centimes!" And she pointed to a broken frond. The young lady behind the counter shook her head contemptuously and busied herself with deft responsive movements, as if the tips of her fingers were conscious of assisting in good works, in tying up a children's picture-book which a bourgeoisie of the city

who had entered the shop was purchasing for her little girl.

Noël in three days! I pictured a childless home for the old woman. Was the *gerbe* for her son? If not for his own consolation, to please Her who could intercede in purgatory at the parting of the ways. A boy or a man, and taken from her how long? Was it an old unhealed wound or a new scar?

"A difference of only fifty centimes! No?"

Had he fallen in the war? I wondered. And this reminded me of what had brought me to the shop. I asked the stern young woman behind the counter if she had a life of Maréchal Foch. She looked puzzled. "A life of Maréchal Foch? But no."

At the sound of the name the old woman seemed to be conscious of the presence of others in the shop for the first time.

"Ah, Maréchal Foch," she said, with the pride of a mother, turning to me and for the moment forgetting her need. "Maréchal Foch. Il est né à T-t-a-r-r-rbes."

I knew then that the *gerbe* was for a son who had fallen for France, and that I had wronged Tarbes.

I could not find a Rue Théophile Gautier in the town. On the other hand, there is a statue to Danton, though not to Bertrand de Barrère his contemporary, the most infamous of Frenchmen, whose derivation from Tarbes might serve as a corrective to pride

should the civic consciousness ever need it, also as a warning to the philosophic historian who would theorise on the homogeneity of the human outcrop of any soil. The horses of Tarbes, famous through France, are a more easily recognisable stock than the citizens. Their supposed derivation from the Arab mounts left behind in the flight of the Saracen army, when they were routed by Charles Martel in 731, may be a little fanciful and far-fetched, yet the Arab strain is preserved by sires imported to the stud, pure Arabs and half-breeds from English dams. These "make their itinerary" throughout the department at due seasons, and we were told that every farmer and most of the *curés* we saw in the market were horse-breeders.

Lourdes is in the department of which Tarbes is the capital, less than half an hour distant by train. We entered it on an inauspicious day, a heavy blanket of cloud, and a tearing wind flinging bucketfuls of sleet horizontally in our faces with such force that it was painful to open one's eyes. We were the only pilgrims, and we noticed the absence of ambulances, doctors, nurses, and priests at the station. To my companion, who was blessed, or cursed, with the rationalistic mind, the place seemed aptly named with its suggestion of superstition, and even of fraud and its too tangible ugliness, in a theatre of great natural beauty. The very substantiality of the hotels and shops, the

massive plate-glass windows, clanking electric tram, and the well-appointed hotel omnibus, weighed heavily on his spirit. Lourdes, not long ago a picturesque little mountain town, had now become a vulgar ex-crescence, with all the appurtenances of *snobisme*, and this had been effected on strictly business lines, as X. believed, for the exploitation of the credulous. This is how it struck the sceptic as he appraised the traffic in relics, tapers, medals, and rosaries; but we had neither of us the right to attempt a translation of the spirit of Lourdes, having only temperament or gossip to guide us.

We passed Bayonne on the way to the Atlantic without breaking our journey, and I did not see the city till March — between trains. It is a weakness among writers of books of travel to pause among historic surroundings and deliver their souls, as if of spontaneous emotion, evoked by the past. In the ancient thoroughfares of France they meet Vercingetorix or Roland, and they people every medieval city with its appropriate ghosts. In Rome they see with inspired vision Balbus laying the first stone of his wall; or if it is in the East they feel "as if a page had fluttered out of the 'Arabian Nights.'" They have no shame in describing battles of long ago, and think that a historic site justifies the paraphrase of chronicles covering whole pages. "Padding," says the captious

reader, who is not in the least appeased by the apologetic "J'étais là," does not, in fact, care whether the fellow was there or not, but sees the book of historical reference lying on the author's writing-table beside his manuscript with a paper-knife stuck in the newly-cut pages.

It was a weakness from which even Taine was not exempt, though he brings in his story justifiably well. He chose Bayonne as the city in which to revive the spectre of the Middle Ages, and honest historian as he was, drew his material from the archives on the spot. Other writers who have dropped in at Bayonne have taken their story from Taine or from the guide-book which derived from him, or from one another. Thus it follows that most visitors have their own picture of the five Basque gentlemen, whom Pé de Puyane lashed to the arches of the bridge, employing his bondsman, Neptune, as executioner to prove that the seigneurie of Bayonne, which meant the same thing as the sovereignty of the sea, extended as far inland as the tide.

My own interest in Bayonne touched a later period. I had been reading about the Peninsular War. I had been over some of the battlefields, and I had been thinking a great deal about Wellington and Soult, and more particularly of a young subaltern who described the Basque country of 1813-14, and the fighting and daily round of our troops in

bivouac and billets in the pages of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' These papers, collected in a volume, probably the first "war book" of its kind, might well be the model of the impressions sent in to 'Maga' by our young sailors and soldiers from every front in the years 1914-18. A fine record in the continuity of a tradition carried through a hundred years. My head was full of the crossing of the Adour, a manœuvre as daring, dramatic, and clinching in its argument as was that of the Tigris by Julian or Maude. I might legitimately have conjured up the spirits of Sir Rowland Hill and Sir John Hope on the ramparts; but such is the impression of the seen as compared with the merely related, that Wellington and Soult and the happy subaltern and all their sallies and assaults and manœuvres have faded from my mind, effaced by a new picture.

I was killing an hour on the ramparts of Bayonne when I was reminded of the observation of the *commis voyageur*. Between trains sometimes one gets more than "a paragraph out of a feuilleton to build a story round."

It was a warm afternoon early in March, and the first elm leaves were just sprouting. I was pottering along absent-mindedly, admiring the blackthorn and fruit-blossom in the fosse, trying to recall the order of precedence among trees as to leaves and catkins and flowers in spring. The vegetation by which I adjusted my mental

calendar, except for the elms, was spread underneath me—which meant that I had no eyes for the path in front—so that I felt a little dazed when I looked up and saw half a dozen cats on the cobbles about my feet, and others approaching stealthily from a distance with an evident purpose to join the first comers. It was most uncanny, like a meeting. I thought of Grimalkin and the witches' Sabbath. I forgot the pageant of the season, so intrigued was I with the cats. I counted fourteen of them. Then I discovered I was under fire, and somehow this did not seem to me at all odd in the atmosphere of mystery and intrigue I had entered. A small damp object fell from the sky, narrowly missing my head, and struck the ground squashily near where I was standing. It was a blob of soft red meat. The nearest cat, a mangy grey, picked it up and quietly bore it away to a doorstep.

I looked up and I saw an old lady at the window of the attic above. I see her now with her hair in curling-papers. Why in curling-papers I cannot think, because her coiffure, which was square and reminded me of Charley's Aunt, had no such adornment. It must be that she looked like the kind of old lady whom one would expect to see looking out of a window and wearing curling-papers at three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon.

In her hand she held a yellowish-brown paper bag, from

which she ejected at intervals of a few seconds the manna for Grimalkin.

I turned aside and sat down under the nearest elm and lit my pipe a few yards from the banquet, apparently unperceived, and certainly unresented, by the old lady and her pensioners. My first impression was one of admiration for the amiable well-behaved cats of Bayonne. Everything was orderly. There was no unseemly scramble. It would sometimes happen, of course, that two cats had their teeth in the same bit of meat, but then one would let go with decent resignation. You would think they were all well fed at home, and had come as a matter of ceremony to please the old lady. One cat only I noticed that betrayed any evidence of passion, and this was not in the road at all, but on the sill of the window immediately underneath the old lady, and unseen by her; for every morsel of meat she threw out passed within a foot of its nose, near enough, I am sure, for its succulence to be appreciated. The excluded one kept jumping uneasily from the sill and disappearing into the interior of the room, no doubt to scratch at the door and make frantic unheeded appeals to be admitted by way of the landing on to the stairs and down into the street.

All the while, as if to fill the cup of irony for the cat immobilised between the banquet and the perennial source of supply, a fat tabby lay on

the outside sill of the window underneath, basking in the sun, glutted to repletion, and no longer interested in the feast. I was fascinated by the movements of a maid the other side of the window. I saw her approach, open it, and deal the cat a vicious whack with her broom, a savage significant movement that implied hatred of felinity in every shape or degree.

At the windows of the other houses in the row I saw other women's faces, all hostile and disapproving. One could see the *patronne* of the cats was regarded as a dangerous and undesirable individualist. One had the more respect for her mission. In the end I saw her roll up the brown-paper parcel and throw it with a pontifical gesture into the street. The cats accepted this as their *Nunc Dimittis*, and departed gravely, as after a service, in twos and threes in slow procession up or down the ramparts.

Now a novelist, the *commis voyageur* perhaps, or Robert Browning, writer of plays, would have got more than a paragraph for a feuilleton from the old lady; here was a chapter at least in a psychological romance. Think of the clues. If the *patronne des chats* had been merely rejecting the superfluities of her table the incident would not have signified much. But there was the brown-paper bag: we may conclude that the cats' Sabbath was conducted according to plan. Nor could it have been

a casual isolated dispensation. For where, I ask, were the dogs of Bayonne when it rained meat from the skies?

Not a single hound disputed the feast. One indeed did pass tentatively and apologetically by under the elm where I was sitting, a miserable lupine Pyrenean pie dog, edging up the grass of the ramparts out of range of sallies. The old lady called to it from her attic to make haste and be gone. But the cats made no protest, and this told its own tale; for one could not believe that their good manners went so far as a dog-truce that might imperil a monopoly. No, that lupine Pyrenean hound was allowed to pass on sufferance. Its inelegibility was implicit. My own theory is that at the inauguration of this festival, probably many years ago, all canine Bayonne behaved as if it had been invited, and that as a result of the encounter it has since abdicated, leaving the field uncontested. I was quite convinced that it was not a first entertainment at which I had been "assisting." The banquet was periodic. I was sure of that. It could not have been annual, quarterly, monthly, or even fortnightly: the rites were too nicely observed to admit of such long lapses between rehearsals. Every cat understood the symbol of the descending bag. Nor could it be daily. This, I was sure, would be beyond the old lady's means. She was very poor, and only rented the top attic.

If she had had any claim on the second floor the excluded cat would never have been shut in, and it would be foolish to suppose that the anti-feline maid on the ground floor owed her any allegiance.

It was a weekly ritual that I had attended. Everything pointed to it, inference as well as elimination. It was Saturday afternoon between three and half-past three. The atmosphere was distinctly *hebdomadaire*. One could read it in the market, in the journals stuck in the doors of the *librairies*, and in the crocodile of small boys in the streets. And I know if I were to visit Bayonne again on a Saturday afternoon and walk from the station to the ramparts between three and half-past three, I would see the same folk at the stalls on the quay, meet the same school filing through the Place de la Liberté to the playing fields in a crocodile with an usher at each end, and if I went to the ramparts and sat under the old elm I would see the *patronne des chats* dispensing her weekly dole.

How she became the Providence of the cats, by what intuition she was persuaded that this was her place in the general scheme, what daily sacrifices she made to retain it, and what picture she had of herself in office, if any picture at all, are problems I bequeath to my friend the *commis voyageur* "to build a little story round them." For myself, on Friday nights I am sorely tempted to take the

train half-way across France to Bayonne.

That premature budding of elm-leaf in Bayonne was a false presage of spring. We had many such days, or half-days—warm wet intervals of south wind, good growing weather, primroses in January, catkins in February, but little sun. March was wet. By the end of the month we were able to recognise the nice graded moods of wind and rain that distinguish the *ondée*, *averse*, *giboulée*, *bourrasque*, and *rafale*. We owed it to the rain-clouds of the Atlantic; we had chosen our sea, and we did not repent it. Better the Basque country than the Catalan, the Atlantic than the Mediterranean, a green world than a brown or yellow one. It meant that we had to wait longer for spring, but it was worth it. One thinks of the Basses-Pyrénées in the terms of the South. Bayonne has its colonnades, Biarritz and St Jean-de-Luz their palms and magnolias, budding watering-places like Hendaye, their pseudo-oriental vegetation carefully tended by the syndicats; but the landscape of the Basque country is essentially homely and pastoral. Instead of the scarred cliffs and dry, stony, treeless water-courses of the Pyrénées Orientales, bare as nullahs in Jebel Hanrin, it is a country of grassy ravines, green as a castle fosse in Picardy, ferns in the mossy roots of the oaks and beeches, dimpled hollows from which one looks through a frame of

hazel catkins on the sea. That was how we first saw the Atlantic from a hill above Hendaye flinging itself in a rage on Les Jumeaux, the rose-coloured twin rocks at the foot of the cove. Any one familiar with flowers will understand what the Basque country owes to the moisture drawn in from the Atlantic when it is explained that these western slopes of the Pyrenees are so far from being arid that the cuckoo flower, which covers them in March, has been mistaken in the distance for a sown crop.

The Basques, when we passed through the little frontier town of Hendaye in the season of lilac, were making holiday. The *chevaux de bois* had been imported from Bayonne. We saw Félicie and Dolores, the maids of our pension, sitting side by side in bliss, three hundred yards for a penny on a throne which Charlemagne would not have disdained. When they descended I saw them examining a purse which one could tell by the look of strained calculation on their faces was empty or nearly so. "You have ridden far?" X. ventured. But Dolores complained that the *chevaux de bois* did not carry her nearly far enough for her money. "We paid 15 centimes," she said. "And were given five minutes?" "No, Monsieur, barely three." We anticipated our parting *douceur*, of course. In a minute or two the merry-go-round began to gyrate to the strains of

"Tipperary," and we stayed to watch them enjoying their hour of bliss, sometimes on the horses, sometimes in the automobile, on the boat or on the throne with the golden canopy, borne along to entrancing music, watching their rapt countenances in the gilded mirrors as they revolved. Then all of a sudden the contraption stopped, when it had just started again. We were reckoning that Félicie and Dolores must have had at least three kilometres of delight.

I had noticed in the dim interior of the structure a horse without a rider that looked just as wooden as the others, more so in fact, as every other horse had an arched neck and flowing mane, and feet which, if they did not actually caper, at least spurned the ground. This poor old dappled-grey pedestrian, whose melancholy long face one saw reflected in the mirrors, I discovered, was the inspiration of the whole machine. From three in the afternoon until eight or nine, and then, after an hour's rest for supper, from nine to midnight, it revolved in its dizzy crepitating prison amidst the dazzle of electric light and mirrors, shouts and cries, and outlandish music. "Cruelty," I expostulated to the showman who gave me the time-table of the entertainment. "But no," he explained, "it is habituated." There was a limit, however, it appeared, to its habituation. For the old dappled grey, the *cheval*

that was not of *bois*, collapsed after Félicie's third kilometre, and the machine, deprived of its sole inspiration, refused to "function." No other habituated animal was to be found, nor would any self-respecting horse of Hendaye be induced to enter the contraption.

There seemed little left when the *chevaux de bois* were eliminated. Félicie and Dolores mistrusted the swing-boats; shooting-booths were for the young men; and the ring game, in which you carried off your bottle of wine if you dropped one of the rings thrown quoit-wise on to the neck, appeared to them too much of a gamble. But half an hour afterwards, when we passed through the *place* again, Hendaye was dancing the Fandango with all the rhythm of spring.

Spring had come in a day after three weeks of almost continuous rain. The limes and plane-trees spread a canopy over the dancers; the lilac was in full bloom; the leaves of the horse-chestnut were unfolding. In the morning the pearly mists had lifted from the Bidassoa. In the clear rain-washed air one could see immense distances. From the hills above Hendaye we could follow the coast-line to the curving white sweep of the Landes beyond Bayonne. The great caravanserais on the cliff at Biarritz, fourteen miles away, were distinguishable with the naked eye. To the south the long promontory ridge of Jaiz-qui-bel, where the Pyrenees glide

smoothly into the sea at Cap Figuiér, interposed a screen, an intriguing natural barrier concealing a wide expanse of Spain. Our impulse was to climb it from Fontarabia at the foot for the view over Guipuzcoa, to discover how much of the Atlantic and the Cantabrian Mountains could be seen from the other side. But we listened to the pipes of Pan, and were drawn inland far away from the sea.

Forty miles up the Bidassoa from the bridge at Irun is the town of Elizondo in Spanish Navarre, once the capital of a small republic where every peasant was a noble—a gentle, favoured, pastoral land. Here we found the garden of the Hesperides, the daughters of Atlas and Hesperis, “who keep the golden fruit beyond the mighty sea.” Iris describes Elizondo to Ceres in ‘*The Tempest*’ :—

“Thy turfy mountains, where live
nibbling sheep,
And flat meads thatched with stover,
them to keep;
Thy banks with pioned and twilled
brims,
Which spongy April at thy heist
betrimms,
To make cold nymphs chaste crowns;
and thy broom-groves,
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor
loves.”

Some Hun pundit, I remember, the same perhaps who restored “sermons” to “books” and “stones” to the running “brooks,” emended the passage in his annotated edition of ‘*The Tempest*.’ “Broom is not a tree,” he argued,

“and cannot therefore be planted in groves. A copyist’s error.” And for “broom” he substituted “elm.” As if to the prostrate bachelor, supine or prone, the broom were not a covering forest. I lay in a broom grove at Elizondo, not in the spirit of the dismissed bachelor, and watched my companion fish the Bidassoa. There was no fly on the water; we did not see a natural rise all day. But we were both bathed in content. There is generally one day in the year, quite apart from all the others, when it seems that everything with the breath of life in it wishes to communicate its consciousness of spring. We watched “the young lambs bound as to the tabor’s sound,” and heard with equal joy the ass’s bray, the blackbird’s song, the hum of insects, the bleating of kids, the tinkle of sheep-bells, the peaceful tolling of the church bells of Elizondo. For it was Sunday, and we watched the black-coated peasants emerge from the farms, berets and mantillas. They carried prayer-books in their hands. I saw one with a tall altar candle, which reminded me of the asphodels in the wood we had passed. Spain might become agnostic or anarchical, but there was nothing in Elizondo to disturb faith or content. Monarchists—they were all Carlists in the ‘seventies, —loyalists, church-goers, bearers of arms—the family escutcheon is carved in stone on the humblest homestead: who among them

could doubt the ordered fitness of their old traditions? One had only to run to read.

There was joy in acceptance in the call of every beast in the valley that spring morning: man was the soberest worshipper in the temple. The lambs and the small long-eared asses on the road, with their panniers of firewood, were more voluble. I watched a large fat pink sow leave her pen in the farm under the broom-grove and descend to the stream to wallow. She drove her snout deep in the soft mud, just as I had seen wild pigs do, uttered a grunt of basic content though she upturned nothing, stirred perhaps by some far-away vestigial memory of truffles, then ploughed three deep furrows and rolled in them until there was not a speck of pinkness left on her. Thus she satisfied her yearnings "in her own natural kind."

Man's vernal impulse, under the broom-grove at least, was, like spongy April's, absorbent, to lie with open pores, and let the benediction soak in. The dismissed bachelor might have stood erect in the broom where the lane led down to the stream. It was ten feet high, solid gold, no alloy of leaf, the purest mintage of the year, brighter than the gorse on the hill or the mustard-field in the valley. In the heat of the day I forsook the broom-grove and found a new couch of indolence on a closely-knitted bed of

purple crocuses; the primrose and violets and celandines still lingered on the bank above, and there was a faint flush of green in the oak. It was a good valley; the old mills with the sweet rank smell of water-weed mingled with flour, and the one-arched ivied bridges with their crop of toad-flax were almost too good to be true. One delighted in the roundness of the hills, the dips and hollows that lend the same charm to a landscape as dimples to a young face, the farms perched on the smooth green knolls, brown roofs islanded in a sea of fruit blossom, the neat apple-orchards—the trees climbing the hill in rows, their branches still leafless, trimmed, and pulled down like hair that has just been combed. But the glory of the valley was the cherry, lovely in spring as in summer and autumn, in blossom and fruit and leaf, and in its exquisite bark, fair and smooth-like skin—the mistress among trees. If I had the laying out of a pastoral mountain landscape, I would make the oak and the beech the stock trees, throw in a poplar or two for grace, aspen and Lombardy; then I would sprinkle the whole countryside with cherry: in the copses on the knolls, on the banks of the streams, in the farm gardens and orchards, and in the fields, dropping their snowy blossom in the golden mustard-crop. This is exactly what the Grand Seigneur has done in Elizondo.

THE DEFENCE OF ABADEH.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR PERCY SYKES, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G.,
LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL SOUTH PERSIA RIFLES.

ABADEH is a small town in Central Persia, situated on the main route between Shiraz and Isfahan, and approximately half-way between the two cities. This unimportant agricultural centre, which was formerly known to the traveller for its beautifully carved sherbet spoons, was the scene of a gallant defence by a small detachment of Indian troops during the fateful summer of 1918. Persia declared her neutrality at the outbreak of the Great War, but was powerless to keep her frontiers inviolable against the Central Powers, who, following the policy of Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, decided to strike at our Indian Empire across Persia, using the powerful Turkish Army as their instrument. Their policy was sound, and had a single Turkish brigade reached the Herat province, it is almost certain that the Afghans and the turbulent tribesmen of the North-West Frontier of India would have joined them, irresistibly lured by hopes of the plunder of India. We could not have met this menace without withdrawing thousands of troops from other fronts, where their numbers were all too small, and, consequently, the success of this plan might have involved

us in disaster. Indeed, it was to prevent its realisation that the British advanced on Baghdad in 1915, although the public at home has not yet realised this important fact, and still, generally speaking, believes that this advance was ordered to secure a success that should serve as a set-off to failures in other fields. For the same reason, the operations of various German bands in Central and Southern Persia at this period, who murdered British and Russian consuls and drove the subjects of both Powers out of the country, and simultaneously despatched Missions to the Amir of Afghanistan, were viewed with deep concern by the British.

As a counter-stroke, I was instructed to raise the South Persia Rifles, a Persian force under British and Persian officers, with the object of restoring the lost authority of the Shah and of protecting British subjects. Its early history was one of constant difficulties, that were overcome through the courage and tact of the young British officer. Recruiting for a regiment was started at Bandar Abbas and for a brigade at Kerman, the capital of South-East Persia; and in November 1916, Shiraz, selected to be the headquarters

of the force, was reached by the little Indian column that had marched across Central Persia. The local situation was complicated by the fact that, in the city and the surrounding province of Fars, there were some three thousand gendarmes, who had been raised by Swedish officers. Unfortunately German gold had corrupted the Swedes, who induced their men to help the Germans in every possible way. They had even seized the British Consul, the bankers and the telegraph officials, and had imprisoned them in a fort behind Bushire, where the intense heat and lack of proper food and accommodation had involved much sickness and even loss of life. At the time of our arrival on the scene, there were no Swedish officers with the force, which was derelict, without discipline or pay, and it was a subject for anxious consideration as to what was the best course to pursue. The Persian Government would not give permission for me to take over the force, but it would not object to this being done, as it was not in a position to regain its authority over it or to pay it. From our point of view the risk of taking over thousands of men, who might remain hostile, was a serious one. On the other hand, if the force were not taken over it would break up, and most of the men would desert with their arms and join the numerous bands of robbers that were rapidly destroying trade and agriculture in unfor-

tunate Fars, and causing scarcity, almost amounting to famine, at Shiraz. Weighing the advantages against the disadvantages, I decided to take over the gendarmes, and assembling their officers, I informed them that they now constituted part of the Fars Brigade of the South Persia Rifles, and I appealed to them to help to restore the authority of the Shah in Fars. The majority of the officers and men were pleased with the change, which secured them good pay and good treatment; but a minority, including many of the best fighters, were hostile to the new order, as they had been making much money by robbery and blackmail.

At first all went well. An efficient staff of officers and also some reinforcements reached me in the spring of 1917; the capture of Baghdad encouraged our friends; and, influenced by this striking success, the Persian Government officially recognised the South Persia Rifles, and expressed its gratification at the progress that was being made towards the restoration of order in Southern Persia.

The chief duty of the force was to guard the main caravan route, and for this purpose Abadeh was the most important centre north of Shiraz. Gradually as units of the Fars brigade were disciplined and equipped, they were despatched to this centre, until the garrison was six hundred strong.

The Swedes had committed the fundamental error of building a line of posts along the route, most of which were held by only eight men. The result was that these small isolated bodies lost discipline and blackmailed any passing caravans; there was no striking force, and the posts were frequently surprised by the tribesmen. The British system was entirely different. The tribes were warned that, if they raided, they would be attacked. The administration of one or two sharp lessons, combined with the movement of strong patrols in the vicinity of the route at irregular times, brought about an almost magical improvement, and the deserted trade route was once again crowded with caravans. It interested me to note that the Persian Governor-General considered that our methods were very hard on the robbers, but of course His Highness did not wish robbery to be entirely suppressed, as he made enormous profits by fishing in troubled waters. His attitude of mind may perhaps be best explained by the following story which he told me. When he was a young man a prince returned to the capital, after a successful tenure of the governorship of Fars. He boasted before his relations how he had stamped out brigandage by ruthless severity, and that Fars was now so safe that a purse of gold could be left by the wayside and no one would dare to touch it. When he

paused, expecting to receive a shower of compliments, an old and highly-respected prince exclaimed, "You acted wrongly. You should have seized the robbers, and by means of torture have extracted their ill-gotten wealth. But when you left Fars you should have released them all, to create trouble for your successor. Thanks to your folly, a grocer's son can now rule the province." His Highness told me that this story contained the secret of how to govern in Persia. To resume, the Abadeh force soon made its influence felt. It behaved well in various encounters with robbers, and the utmost good feeling prevailed between the British and Persians when I inspected the garrison in 1917, the gallantry and wonderful shooting at long ranges of their leaders having profoundly impressed the Persians. Altogether, it seemed that a happier era had dawned for Fars, but this view was shortly proved to be unwarranted.

In the early spring of 1918 Germany made her last great attack in the West, and to Persia, anxious to spot the winner, it appeared that the Kaiser was the victor of the World War. In the middle of March the British Government had delivered a note at Tehran, by the terms of which recognition of the South Persia Rifles was demanded from the Cabinet then in office. Three weeks later, at a time when the military position of Germany

was of the brightest, the reply was given that "the force was a foreign force, and constituted a threat to Persian independence and integrity." Orders were issued from Tehran to publish this insolent reply far and wide in South Persia, and at the same time every effort was made to induce the officers and men of the South Persia Rifles to mutiny. The religious fanatics at Shiraz and other centres also preached against the British, and there was small blame to the South Persia Rifles if they succumbed to these powerful influences. More than this, members of the Cabinet incited the *Ilkhani* or Supreme Chief of the powerful Kashgai tribe and its allies to attack the British. These incitements were so successful that in May a confederacy of tribes under Solat, the Kashgai *Ilkhani*, declared war upon us, alleging the orders of the Persian Government to exterminate the British, and invested the force of Indian troops at Shiraz for a period of about six weeks. Our position was one of extreme difficulty, and as there was no possibility of being relieved, it seemed to be unwise to weaken the small body of about two thousand Indian troops by detachments. However, there are exceptions to every rule, and when serious desertions were reported from Abadeh, two hundred men of the 16th Rajputs were immediately despatched to support the isolated British officers. The alternative of ordering the

garrison to retire on Shiraz was rejected as unsound.

The two outstanding figures of the drama were Mohamed Ali Khan, a cousin of Solat, and Amir Ashair, half-brother of the *Ilkhani*. The former had been Governor of the district until recently, and owned considerable property in the neighbourhood. He was a typical nomad, brave, greedy, changeable, and treacherous, but his local influence made him a dangerous enemy. He was unwilling to show open hostility to the British until he was sure how events at Shiraz would turn out; but much of his property was at the mercy of Solat, who repeatedly wrote to him that he would ravage it unless he attacked Abadeh. For a while he was able to delay actual hostilities, alleging the necessity of collecting men and munitions, but ultimately he was obliged to lead his men against the British. Amir Ashair was also a typical nomad, but he possessed more knowledge of the outside world from residing at Shiraz. He had also been an inmate of the hospital of the Church Missionary Society at Isfahan, and had been influenced by the efficiency of the treatment and the great kindness shown to him in his serious malady of disease of the spine. He was on bad terms with Solat. His influence at first was exerted on behalf of the British, and he repeatedly advised Mohamed Ali to wait until it was certain

that the Kashgais could defeat the British at Shiraz before attacking such a great power. Meanwhile, he kept inquiring what terms would be offered him if he kept Mohamed Ali from attacking Abadeh. He hoped that his brother might be made *Ilkhani* instead of Solat, who was only his half-brother, and in this case he might aspire to be *Ilbegi*. In fact, he had often suggested this combination to me at Shiraz during the previous winter. Unfortunately, at this juncture a caravan of specie for the Imperial Bank of Persia reached Abadeh on the way to Shiraz. It was detained, owing to the insecurity of the route, and greed for this rich booty upset the negotiations and brought Amir Ashair to the side of the enemy. He showed such energy when his decision was once made that it was rumoured far and wide that his thirst for the bank treasure had cured his spine complaint! The Persian Government, although appealed to, made no attempt to restore order at Abadeh. Probably, as was claimed, it encouraged the two chiefs to attack the British. The first move was made by Mohamed Ali, who despatched some of his men to occupy two strong towers in his house at Abadeh, which commanded the lines of the South Persia Rifles. This scheme was defeated by Major Fraser of the Central India Horse, who was in command, and the towers were taken over

by the South Persia Rifles. Early in June, following the example set by the force at Shiraz, the Persian officers took an oath of loyalty to their British officers, and on the following day all Persian ranks were offered their discharge, but only twenty availed themselves of the offer, the remainder declaring their entire willingness to serve in the South Persia Rifles.

The next move by Mohamed Ali was the issue of a flamboyant proclamation, which stated that "the object of the Persian Government and the wishes of the nation were the protection of Islam and the defeat and destruction of the infidel enemies." The two chiefs then commenced operations against the British, at a time when the loyalty of the South Persia Rifles had been successfully undermined by propaganda, and by the proclaimed hostility of the Persian Government to the existence of the force. Moreover, a traveller from Shiraz was induced to declare on oath that the British at Shiraz had all been killed. The gullible Persians believed the tale, and it was this, perhaps more than anything else, that turned the scale among the officers and men of the force.

The attack on Abadeh, which was made by night on 28th June, would have been easily repulsed, but there was treachery at work, and little resistance was offered by the South Persia Rifles, who murdered

the few officers who were loyal to the British. At the same time there was evidently a strong feeling against killing the British officers, who all safely reached the little mud fort and adjoining house and garden, which were occupied by the 16th Rajputs, to whose custody the reserve ammunition had already been entrusted. During this crisis the Rajputs were severely tested, as the Persians, from position after position, suddenly opened fire on them. Indeed, for three days they had little rest day or night, since the enemy attacked boldly with considerable advantage as to cover, while sniping from three sides was practically continuous. But the men, although worn out, beat off attack after attack, generally inflicting heavy losses, until, in spite of their overwhelming numbers, the besiegers were profoundly discouraged. But now a new danger threatened, for it was suddenly noticed that the ground near the fort was becoming wet, and that a heavy head of water was coming down on it. Captain Gwynne Griffith of the Royal Engineers, with Sergeant Barnes, made a reconnaissance under heavy fire to ascertain where the irrigation channel had been cut. They set to work to repair the bank, but Gwynne Griffith was mortally wounded. Fraser ran out to his aid, and with Sergeant Barnes saved the situation by closing the breach. During the night a bank was constructed round

the fort and channels were dug, which effectually secured the garrison from this menace. No sooner, however, was one danger averted than another appeared in the shape of an outbreak of cholera. In spite of the crowded area, the epidemic was kept within small limits through the great care that was exercised, whereas, among the enemy, there were numerous deaths, including that of Mohamed Ali, to the deep discouragement of the enemy. But their spirits were raised for a while by the successful manufacture of a gun which fired a cylindrical lead bullet, strong enough to break through the wall. Instead of lowering the *moral* of the garrison, some members of which had served in France, the local "breaching battery" was considered a subject for jest. A few days later the last general attack was made, but was defeated with heavy loss. The use of flares not only revealed the position of the enemy, but frightened them, so recourse was finally had to mining, in which Persians are singularly expert. Fortunately this new form of attack did not escape the vigilance of the garrison, and a countersap was made with such accuracy that, after the siege, it was found to have been dug within a few feet of the two enemy mines.

We must now return to events at Shiraz. The British were invested shortly after a successful action on 25th May,

for, although considerable casualties were inflicted on the Kashgais, they received strong reinforcements from every side, and reappeared on the scene in such force that they were able to occupy the garden quarter of the city. We sallied out time and again, always inflicting losses, but suffering casualties that we could ill afford; we also had an outbreak of cholera. What actually saved us was the cutting of the telegraph lines by the enemy. Upon our arrival at Shiraz I had realised that we might have to fight the Kashgais, and had taken pains to make friends with Sirdar Ehtesham, the half-brother and rival of Solat, who had been *Ilkhani* some years previously. So long as the telegraph line was working, nothing would have induced the Persian Government to dismiss Solat, who was actually carrying out their orders. But I informed the Governor-General that he and I now represented our respective countries, and that it was essential that Solat should be dismissed and Sirdar Ehtesham installed in his place; and so persuasive was I, that His Highness finally agreed to take the necessary steps and to bestow the official robe of honour on our nominee. For some days there was a state of tension, coupled with intense intrigue; but the Kashgais began to desert Solat for the new *Ilkhani*, and when the column again struck, the Kash-

gais fled pursued by Kashgais. On the very day that this action was fought which ended the investment a letter was received from Fraser, giving an account of his critical position. It was clearly a case for prompt action, and within thirty-six hours of the return of the victorious troops a column was marching swiftly northwards to relieve the Abadeh garrison.

It was midsummer, but the troops under Lieut.-Colonel Valentine Williams realised that they must expend their energy to the last ounce, and forced marches of great length were accomplished. The news was vaguely alarming as the column advanced northwards, but the garrison was still holding out, and by a supreme effort Williams brought his force before dawn of 18th July into positions which would have cut off the besiegers. But, alas! by mere chance three of the mutineers had been sent to collect supplies to the south, and had sighted the camp of the Indian troops, of whose presence, until then, they had had no news whatever, with the result that, four or five hours before the net was closed, the mutineers had fled north. After all, the main task of Williams was the relief of Abadeh, which he effected by his fine march of 180 miles in 169 hours. Nor was this all that the relief column accomplished, for Isfahan was being threatened by the Bakhtiaris

in great force. The Persian authorities were powerless to defend its rich bazaars, and it was only the defeat of the Kashgais and the rapid march of the British that saved Isfahan from the horrors of being looted. Thus, in far-off Persia, at a time when disaster would have reacted to our serious disadvantage westwards in

Mesopotamia, and, still more, eastwards in Afghanistan and the Panjab, this little British force held Abadeh and inflicted some two hundred casualties on the besiegers. As my account shows, their valour saved them; and it may be said of the defenders and of the relieving force that they were true to type.

MEMOIRS OF A MOTORIST.

BY MAJOR T. J. MITCHELL, D.S.O.

MY first experience of a motor-car was many, many years ago, when the motor-car was still a comparatively rare means of conveyance. I was home on leave when a local practitioner suggested that I might usefully fill in some time by doing his work, and allowing him to go to the Territorial camp. I made one condition—that I should get the use of his car. The season being summer-time, work was light, and I was able to enjoy many runs into the country. On one occasion I took several friends, who thoroughly enjoyed the outward trip; on the homeward journey both back tyres punctured. It was in the days when no spares or Stepneys were carried, so all that could be done was to cut some hay from the roadside and stuff the tyres with it. We bumped home at a leisurely pace. I have always admired that country doctor, and I have a very warm spot in my heart for him to this day, because when I told him the result of my outing he had sufficient self-restraint to screw up a smile and say, "It couldn't be helped." But I heard afterwards from his wife and chauffeur that his language was somewhat tropical for the next few days.

When stationed in India I

was sent to a cantonment which in the old days had been called Mian-mir. It was popularly known as the graveyard of British troops. The wonderful Indian Government had considered in detail many schemes for its improvement, and the high officials having interviewed many scientists, the Government ultimately took the drastic action of changing its name from Mian-mir to Lahore Cantonments. Now the cantonment is an arid barren sort of place, and every sensible officer and man takes every possible opportunity of transferring his attention to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, a town five miles away, and teeming with every advantage which makes life in the East reasonably comfortable. A *tum-tum* or trap is a slow mode of progression, and when a senior officer in the corps suddenly received orders to return to England for duty, the mess decided that I should buy his motor-car. As I had just returned from a splendid and exhilarating leave of three months—a leave spent as only a bachelor from India knows how to spend 'leave in this country—the exchequer was somewhat depleted. But the colonel accepted a sporting offer of £150—£100 down and £50 to be paid when the exchequer

was full—and a five-seater German-made Adler car was mine.

The colonel was due to leave Lahore in a week's time. Any one who has been in the East knows how much a popular officer can put into a week. His social engagements somewhat interfered with my tuition, but the night before he left I got ten minutes' instruction in driving the car. Next morning I took it over at the railway station, and a brother officer was persuaded to accompany me in the car to its new quarters. We started all right, and were going along beautifully, but as we approached the level-crossing where the railway passes over the main road, we found the gates shut, the signal against us, and the train coming up. My friend exclaimed, "My God, Jock! why don't you stop?" To which I replied with equal emphasis, "Good God! I would if I knew how to!" By both pulling at every lever and pushing down every pedal, we drew up with a crunch. No damage was done, but we welcomed a cooling whisky-and-soda when we ultimately reached the mess.

Thereafter an officer in the S. and T. Corps, whose hobby was motoring, took me in hand. He insisted that I should learn "the elements of motoring," and before I realised what this meant I was dipping into horrible grease. He demonstrated that the gears were well worn by showing me the shiny little

shavings of metal, and he discovered many other defects. My heart was beginning to sink, when he said, "Well, the old bus isn't a bad car to learn on, but for goodness' sake don't let your bearer touch it!" Now Khuda Baksh, to my mind, was a high-class mechanic, and what every officer in India thinks his bearer—the only perfect one in the station. He was the local joiner and electrician for the different messes and bungalows in the station, and I had determined that he, and not I, should keep the car in running order. He did it eminently well: the car was always kept running, sometimes to the danger of the passer-by, and sometimes to the danger of the numerous occupants, who treated it as the local carrier's cart, which is never by any chance underloaded. I little realised what effect this would have on the tyres, but knowledge was soon to come.

I had arranged to take a senior officer and his wife into Lahore, leave them at a wedding, and take a lady who was their guest for a run into the country. Later in the evening I was to call for my senior officer and his wife at the Lahore gymkhana and take the party home to dinner. Everything went well until I was within three miles of the gymkhana on my return journey, when bang went a tyre! Nothing daunted, I loosened my coat and had a five minutes' round with an old-fashioned

Stepney wheel. The wheel had an easy victory. By this time a crowd of half-dressed natives had gathered, and I explained to my companion, who was just out from England, that there was no cause for alarm. At that moment a Babu, dressed in a shirt, boots, and a frock-coat, approached on a bicycle. I decided that I would take a loan of his machine, cycle to Lahore and bring back a mechanic, while my companion was to remain quietly in the car. I explained that no harm would come to her in my absence. She was surprised at the easy way the Babu delivered up his bicycle to a stranger. She was also surprised, a little interested, and more nervous to find herself the centre of a rapidly increasing throng of natives, but with true British courage she remained in the car, a stranger in an unknown land with darkness falling, and awaited my return. Now a mechanic in Lahore is not easy to find, but ultimately I was successful, and a few minutes after his arrival on the scene he had the Stepney attached and we were able to proceed on our journey. Our friends, after waiting till the last minute at the gymkhana, had hired a gharrie and gone home. We arrived when dinner was over; we certainly got some physical nourishment, but not that mental comfort both required, as it was evident that our misfortune had been considered a well-planned scheme, for in

Indian station life, when any attention is paid to a lady by a mere man, prophecy is rife, and generally swells into the Wedding March. Perhaps in this case it was justified, as the lady is now the sharer of all my sorrows and the comrade of my joys.

Some time later she went on to another station, and I took advantage of that great institution which India provides—a ten days' station leave which counts as duty. I had left my bearer behind and the car in running order; when I came back, the car was there but the gears would not engage. My bearer, my trustworthy bearer, knew nothing about this. He had not touched the car. The car, however, had a distinctive appearance: it was the only cream-coloured car in the station. My bearer also was a well-known character, and I soon learned from my mechanical S. and T. friend—who incidentally rubbed it in with great delight—that during my absence the car had been seen careering down the main bazaar in the Indian quarter of the town; it was driven by my bearer, and filled with ladies whose beauty was more undeniable than their virtue. His parting shot was, "Didn't I warn you well about allowing a bearer to touch the car? If I were you, I would thrash the beast and sack him at once."

Advice is always easily given, but not always so easily followed. Thrash and dismiss the

only decent bearer I had ever had, a man who by his attentions to me made me feel as if I were a millionaire! After all, what had he done? Succumbed to a little temptation. No, it couldn't be done. The car might go, but the bearer must remain.

The car had already been hauled into a garage kept by an Indian in Lahore. But the Adler, although a delightful car, was made by Germans, and Germany is far from India, and new gears were difficult to obtain. I decided to buy a new car if the Adler were taken in part payment. The Indian shopkeeper, with all his faults, is a bit of a sportsman, and has some use even for a collection of scrap-iron. We differed for a long time as to how much the Adler represented in hard cash. I had my views, he had his, and some amusing bargaining followed. In the East bargaining is a fine art, and must be done slowly. In time, if you have a good name in the bazaar, you approach a figure which no doubt means a loss to you and a gain to the dealer, but the loss will be a minimum one. One realises that this figure has been reached when the Indian merchant is prepared to toss. After trying various cars, I ultimately decided on a Studebaker. I tossed, lost the toss, wrote a cheque, and drove away in the Studebaker. This type of car is usually noted for its easy running capabilities, but this one had its faults and its

moods. Every now and then it would stop. This was in the days before self-starters were known, so the only thing to be done was to turn and turn and turn the starting-handle. Its moods caught me once. The result was a skinned hand, and I engaged an Indian chauffeur. I could not understand his language; he could not understand mine, and I soon realised that the only duty he would be able to perform was to turn the handle. Within a week his hand was in a sling, and he left willingly without payment. I tried several Indian chauffeurs. As long as the car was in a good mood each was a faithful servant; when the car jibbed, he asked for a day's leave in the polite Indian way, and before I knew had quitted my service.

It was during a period when I was without a servant that I foolishly offered to drive a party to the Hunt dinner and ball. My guests on this occasion had not heard about my car's peculiarities. They were soon to get a practical demonstration. The car went well to their bungalow, the party were comfortably seated, and everything went smoothly until two of the five miles had been passed, when all of a sudden—she stopped. It was a warm night, and we were suitably attired for a dinner and dance on such a night. I did my best, peered into every bit of the car and underneath the chassis, covered myself with

Indian dust, got overheated and dirty, but nothing happened. The guests got fidgety. For a few minutes they confined their attention to their watches, then their tongues got the better of their hearts, and their description of me tallied exactly with my own feelings. Everything had passed us on the road, so there was no chance for them of a conveyance to the ball. They had perforce to trudge wearily home, leaving me with the car. Before they were actually out of reach, I summoned up courage to ask them to send a gang of coolies to my rescue, and after a two hours' wait the gang appeared, headed by my worthy bearer. We shoved and pushed until we got the car back to my own bungalow. An Indian coolie loves to shout whenever he is doing a bit of manual labour. To this gang, judging by their cheering and noise, it was a triumphal procession of mind over matter.

A few weeks later I applied for two months' leave, decided to sell the car, and go home. To buy a car is one thing, to sell it in a hurry is another. I have some scruples, and I could not offer it to any sahib. I decided to put it up to auction.

An auction is an interesting function in India. Many hours before it was timed to commence large crowds of chattering excited natives had gathered in the compound. All wanted to buy the car, at a price. Their price left me

stone-cold; I would sooner have hacked the thing to bits with a hatchet. Fortunately there were some who were willing to consider the possibility of buying instead of stealing the car. These were all given a trial run. The car went beautifully, in and out of the bungalow compound, round corners, reversed, went dead slow and at top speed—no car could have behaved better. When all the trials were finished the auction began. Ultimately a fat old gentleman was the winner at about half the price of the car. In due course hard cash was produced, bundles of it, a receipt was signed, hands were shaken, and the new owner and an Indian chauffeur mounted the car. They had got as far as the gate when ominous noises were heard, and the car stuck. The numerous inhabitants of the compound were much interested. The bearer produced a long chair and cigarettes, and I sat down to watch and appreciate the circus. By-and-by the fat bunyah who had bought the car came back and demanded his money. I said, "No, my friend; the deal is closed. If you take my advice, you will hire some of my servants and get the beastly thing pushed home." The one and only time that I fully appreciated that car was when it was being pushed away from my compound.

The same afternoon I received official intimation that

my leave to England had been granted.

There were many side-shows with cars in France; others, more interesting still, when the Ford was introduced into Mesopotamia. There, in due course, the supply became sufficient, and administrative medical officers of the different formations could always obtain a Ford touring-car. In my particular formation we thought it essential that the staff should have a reliable chauffeur. We inspected many, and finally the choice fell on a well-known professional golfer hailing from North Berwick. A Scot and a well-known golfer deserve special consideration, and Davy Grant got it. Never was his car unfit for the road, and both on the road and over the desert Davy was an excellent companion. He was allowed considerable latitude. When the heat was oppressive his kit consisted of a loose open-fronted shirt, a pair of shorts, and white canvas shoes that a fond relation had sent him.

One morning just as we were preparing to start on an extended tour of inspection, we were informed that Davy had been placed under arrest for being improperly dressed. A young and enthusiastic inspecting officer straight from home, full of understanding about motor-cars but with no knowledge either of the climate or of the Scot, had discovered the ex-golfing professional dressed in his own inimitable style ready to accompany a

senior staff officer. I had some difficulty in explaining to this young man that his action was unwarranted, but after a time he agreed to let the driver come out of arrest provided I spoke severely to him. I promised to do so. Davy was called up, and saluted in his own way. I explained to him the exact position of affairs. He asked if he might make a statement, and consent being given, spoke thus: "Well, Mr —, thank you for yer kindly words of advice—but thae English folk are d—queer beings!" I still think he was right on this occasion.

Another time it so happened that Davy had to drive myself and a couple of senior general staff officers across a stretch of the desert he knew well. The senior officers were constantly gazing at the stars and then referring to maps by the light of pocket electric torches. According to their idea, they were guiding the car across the desert by the stars. They were continually interfering with David, who paid absolutely no attention to them. When their attentions at last got too pressing, he turned round with, "Damn a' this potterin'—I could drive ye hame wi' my een shut!"

After the Armistice there were great schemes in Mesopotamia for forming permanent cantonments for the Army of Occupation. In my area the conqueror of Ramadi and Khan Baghdadi, a triple knight and the originator of that fine

divisional motto, "Sweat and swear, but smile and get on with it," under whom it was my good luck to serve, formed an inspecting committee composed of a well-known sporting brigadier-general—a man whose left breast is covered with what our American friends call an extended herbaceous border, beginning with that decoration, the hall-mark of bravery—a signalling officer who had had a prolonged career in Oxford University, and myself. The committee had to make a wide tour. They were provided with three touring-cars and three Ford vans. At the time of the inspection sand-grouse were covering the desert in millions, and such an opportunity could not be missed by our sporting leader. The convoy moved across the desert in two echelons, the first consisting of the guns, the second the pickers-up. We made frontal attacks on the sand-grouse, each gun getting off as many shots as possible and the drivers urging their cars to their utmost speed, while the guns kept firing. In the brief space of a few minutes from fifty to seventy sand-grouse were picked up. Never again shall I see such a sight—Ford cars following a pack of grouse, and birds falling in every direction over the desert for several miles. Nor is it likely that I shall ever again be present at such record bags in record time. Needless to say, the grouse always ensured us a warm welcome in any regimental mess we visited.

On the way to Nejef we had a picnic lunch of roast grouse and chupatties, the Indian's substitute for bread, washed down with a glass of Japanese beer. The sight of the beer proved too much for our A.S.C. drivers, and evidently they thought that by playing an old soldier's trick they also would get their share. Just as we had settled down the senior driver reported to the general that they had all forgotten to put sterilised water in their water-bottles. Our leader was too old a hand to be caught in that way. With a charming smile he unloaded his own water-bottle, and passed it to the drivers.

During the afternoon, farther on the road to Nejef, we passed some very pretty Persian women, refugees, and could not but remark on their beauty, little anticipating a sequel. My bearer was a very respectable old Mahommedan. Unfortunately for me, he managed to get and dispose of a large quantity of arak. Inflamed by this native stimulant, his passions got the better of him, and he resolved that he at least should stop and pay tribute to the ladies' charms. The Burmese driver of his particular van was more conscientious, and refused to stop, but the bearer was not thus lightly to be diverted from his purpose, and, full of confidence, he seized the wheel and steered the car into a deep ditch. That night the loss of one of our valued transport vans was

reported to the general. From the description of the occurrence I knew that my faithful servant was the cause of the disaster, and thought it required disciplinary measures. The C.O., however, considered Jooman a man of good taste, and forgave the offence.

In due course our service in Mesopotamia was ended, and on returning to the United Kingdom in June 1919, the feeling that war was over, and the knowledge that there were considerable savings in the bank, induced most of us to take part in what is now known amongst service men as "the mad year." In my case one result was that a beautiful Minerva came into my possession. It had been stored during the war, and while the engines and chassis were sound, the tyres could not stand many miles of travel. Our first few hundred miles saw the tyres go with a bang. Replacement cost a considerable sum of money, but what was money during the first weeks of one's leave in that year? The constant changing of tyres and the little attentions which the engine required necessitated the engaging of a chauffeur. He had also served in the Army, and was of a gay and sporting character. His first remark on being engaged was, "I presume, sir, you do not wish me to drive fast." To this day I do not know what he meant by "fast." All I do know is that when he was at the wheel the car never ran

at anything under forty-five miles an hour.

When my chauffeur left, the Minerva gradually came to be too troublesome to look after. She was a big car to wash down, oil and grease, so it was decided to put her into store and buy a little Morris-Cowley coupée. The coupée arrived, and as it was the first of its kind ever seen in the neighbourhood, it created no end of wonder. Whenever we drove into town a crowd of children, and others, came round to look at her. The makers when they deliver this car advise the owner not to run it at over twenty miles an hour for the first 500 miles. I never had the chance to run even up to twenty miles an hour, for it was winter time and the roads were heavy, and she puffed like an old steam-engine on the hills. When spring came, both the Minerva and the Morris-Cowley were put up for sale.

It seems a simple matter to advertise cars for sale, especially as reliable motoring papers very frequently give full details of a correct advertisement. These models we followed, and the cars were advertised in all the papers. The answers we received were often amusing. One came from the proprietor of a small Highland inn, who desired to carry his guests to various popular fishing grounds. Unfortunately the price he was prepared to offer was only about one-tenth of what was asked. Others

stated they wished to make a small present of the cars to daughters who were coming of age. Some applicants requested details of one's private life and the reason for selling the cars. Others gave fatherly advice, and proved conclusively that there was not a car in the market they did not know, and that if a friendly tip were taken the cars would be disposed of to them for about half the advertised price. Others complained that in the coupée there was no electric self-starter, and seemed annoyed because I could not state there was one. Many came long distances to see the cars, and tried every device to get them at a lower price. They brought experts who examined the vehicles minutely. Others, again, did not like the cars, but thought that if I were selling the house at a reasonable figure they might buy both house and car. In the end both cars passed out of my hands, and I am glad to say that the present owners still remain friendly, and are pleased with their purchases.

With the financial depression of the succeeding year, one felt one must do one's bit and do without a car, but the craving for movement was so strong that as a compromise a Ford was acquired. I shall always lift my hat to that type of car, for no matter where you go, no matter where and when you may break down, there is always some one on the roadside who can repair her, and

the repairing material may be anything from a bit of twine to a stout wire.

The first long journey was to the West Highlands of Scotland, through Glencoe. The Ford would have gone like a bird had her tyres been newer. Every now and then one would go "crack," and out we got. In a garage it is a simple thing to whip off a tyre and put a new one on. Far away from any help it presents many difficulties on a hot summer day. There is just one encouraging feature to remember about tyres. You may lose four in rapid succession and have to replace them, but some time generally elapses before new ones are again required. Some people coming after us declared they could spot the road we followed by the tyres we left at intervals along our track. By the time we had reached our West Highland hotel dinner had long been over. Mine host, however, was a genial soul, and soon the toils of the journey were forgotten in the pleasures of the supper table.

A fishing hotel is an interesting place to stay in. For a man, the interest increases when the majority of fishers belong to the opposite sex. There is a stern reality associated with their pursuit of this pastime. Most men can enjoy a day's outing and a good story even though they fail to catch fish. A lady angler despises you if in the heat of a blazing summer day you recline in some shady nook to enjoy a bottle of beer

and, perhaps, a super-excellent sleep. She despises you more if you return in the evening empty-handed. She aims at getting the record catch of the day. The gillies, too, get tainted with this gross desire. For a time we could keep ours in check, but one day he put it to us that it was a matter of honour for his boat to bring in at least some trout. Thereupon we did our best. We had a 9-inch measure, we carefully measured every trout, and everything under the regulation nine inches went back to the water. In the end we secured a great success. The catch of the day was ours, and where others came in with two and three, we came in with one dozen and four.

It was the custom at that particular hotel for mine host to meet the motor brake bringing back the fishers, and to question each severely as to the day's catch, his daughters standing by with a large dish to receive the trout. One glance at my respected wife brought back all the training painfully learned under a Hun offensive, and I knew that I could safely leave affairs in her hands. I saw that the only plan for me was to slip quietly through the hall and upstairs to our sitting-room, where I could smoke a cigarette and picture the scene below. My wife had taken up a determined stand beside that dish. She assisted mine host to count the fish, and in a few well-chosen words she dealt with

those members of her sex who attempted any criticism of the quality of our catch.

When it became known that we were leaving the hotel, an enthusiastic motoring couple, realising that our exit from the wilds of the West Highlands would not be easy, intimated that they had to go along the same road, and suggested that if we did not mind they might start a little before us. At every dangerous corner and hill we found those faithful friends waiting patiently until we hove in sight so that they could give us a friendly warning. The Ford behaved extremely well. For four days she only required oil, petrol, and water. On the last lap we took a saddle-backed bridge with much courage and little skill. The penalty was not recognised at the time; it was only when taking a cargo of human beings out to our country home that a broken back spring was revealed. In turning a narrow corner the car suddenly decided on a course of her own. This little display of temper led to our parting with the Ford, and she was passed to the local dealer in part payment for a nobler representative of her class.

A new car has always a peculiar fascination. With it come statistics to show how many miles per gallon of spirit and oil it can run. The innocent will believe these statistics, and spend many hours calculating the amount of petrol in his tank and the number

of miles he has run. The experienced hand dismisses such items as good stories more worthy of an angler. So long as the car goes, and goes smoothly, he will be well content. On better acquaintance he will feel that his car is a well-disposed friend, giving the satisfaction that friendship alone brings.

The day came when an official order sent me off to the metropolis. With all due respect to the delights of that city, the prospect of keeping a big car in town did not appeal to me. She was accordingly stored, and an attempt was made to get a cheap second-hand car in town. Dealers are expert disbelievers in the truth, but while the working, testing, and bargaining are going on they are your dearest friends, and you are promised a new heaven and earth. My heaven quickly passed when my partner and I set out on a short tour in the car we had just acquired, which was no doubt cheap. We started on that tour with confidence, the parting words of our insinuating friend being, "This little beauty will take you anywhere!"

As we crawled with great care through one of the parks a uniformed official held up his hand and peered first at our number and then at our faces. It appeared that we were emitting a foul smoke in a place where that was not permitted. We apologised humbly, promised never to do it

again, and asked leave to go on. This was readily granted, as the smoke had almost become a cloud. Never shall I forget that journey. Everything that could go wrong went wrong. Every garage on the road to W—— was visited or looked at. Every thirteen or fourteen miles we stopped to add oil or water. We did, however, reach our destination, where a mechanic pointed out some of our many defects; but as Scotland is not the only place where a silver lining to a palm expedites work, we were able to leave on a Sunday afternoon. Our hopes were high as the new purchase skimmed along the road; but, alas! our many handicaps were again too much for us, and we were glad to leave a broken-down wreck in a garage not far from O——. The proprietor kindly got a car and sent us on to O——, where a most excellent dinner, washed down with a little Dumminy, 1911, raised our somewhat dejected spirits, and made the journey entitled to a record in our diary.

Bereft of our car, and still fifty miles from home, there was nothing for it but to avail ourselves of the useful, if commonplace, railway train—an ignominious termination to a motoring trip perhaps, but at all events a method of locomotion conducive to much thought.

The station at O—— on a Sunday night is an interesting place. Here one gets a glimpse into the studies of anthropology so ably expounded by Sir Arthur

Keith. Here one sees the meeting of East and West, and it is not always comforting to one who has served for a considerable period in the East.

The train journey back is no less interesting if one is in the mood to look at things with a kindly eye. A well-kept cricket-pitch and the tennis-courts just outside O—recall younger days. The Molasine poultry-farm might be mistaken for a series of modern, well-ventilated, well-lighted suburban villas. Farther along there is a seed-grower's nursery with ideal miniature golf-courses laid out—golf-courses that rouse the desire to become a champion, or for the days of retirement to come in sight. Maidenhead is passed, and one sees a pleasing picture: the sight of healthy young men and women enjoying the pleasures that a river such as the Thames can give. Farther on a well-known name catches the eye, and one recalls with a smile the dark and gloomy days of 1914, when the officers and men of the British Expeditionary Force, tired of battle, and tired of trenches, were still more tired of plum-and-apple jam.

Near this famous factory is situated an equally famous firm dealing principally in antiseptics and vermicides. It, too, was not passed without a smile, called up by the recollection of a hardened old Scottish soldier, who, during an intensive bombardment, happened to be busily engaged catching those little grey animals that have a predilection for one's underclothing and for performing gymnastics over the anterior portion of one's anatomy. The mere act of picking one of these animals off the back of his neck saved his life. He expressed his thanks thus—

"I'm no blooming Haig, so I canna decorate you, and I'm no blankety blank colonel, so I canna promote you; but I'll treat you as a man, so back ye go and hae a damned guid feed!"

At last we drew into Paddington. Our troubles were not yet over, for the train had been crowded, and the number of taxis was limited; but patience was rewarded in the end, and we were rapidly conveyed to our home, tired, but, in spite of all, amused with our day.

A MIXED BAG.

BY X.

I.

LONG ago a certain good and wise man taught me that to spend Christmas in a house was a right and proper thing to do if that were in Great Britain, but if not, then the thing was to avoid houses and to spend 25th December and as many days before and after it as possible in camp. This same sage used also to say that a mixed bag was infinitely better than mere numbers.

It was while on our way to put his sayings into practice that J. and I found that we had time to kill at a somnolent little Indian railway station. There it sat very solid and very trim as compared with the slatternly mud village close to it. Around it lay a great flat sea of young wheat and barley. Above were the never-clouded blue winter sky and the always shining, kindly, winter sun. The blue rock-pigeons cooed a lullaby, the telegraph in the station-master's office muttered in its sleep, and the station dozed.

It was under the mistaken idea that we were going to catch a train by a hair's-breadth that we dashed into the station, shattering its noonday repose, and fluttering all its doves. The pigeons rushed from theirs, and Mr Hurree North

(I spell him phonetically) rolled quivering from his.

A vast man this Mr North, once an aspirant for the degree of Bachelor of Arts at one of our too numerous Indian universities, and now writing a large "B.A." after his name and a very small "fail" after the "B.A." In this way Mr North notifies modestly to the world that he has at least had a jolly good try, although, judging by his English, he must have failed by a wideish margin.

Hurree North is the station-master, and is upholstered in a pink loin-cloth and an upper garment of muslin. No more unmasculine dress could possibly be devised by man for man, but then its wearer is not manly. He is out of Bengal, where there aren't any men, but only soft chocolate-coloured things with great brains, little understanding, and no valour whatever.

On his head and concealing the single lock of hair without which no good Hindu can gain Paradise, is a velvet pork-pie cap of distressing aspect and figured in green. He wears white socks and patent-leather, elastic-sided shoes, adorned with sham mother-of-pearl buttons. Between rim of socks

and hem of loin-cloth is an undulatory expanse of chocolate leg. Benevolent spectacles, with a twinkle behind them, complete the station-master's outfit.

If you add him up aright, he should come out a combination of Mr Pickwick and the Friar of Copmanhurst, without the virility of either. Indeed, he makes no pretence to it.

When the last ripples caused by our sudden onset have died from Mr Narth's corpulent body, and when he has settled down again into his natural dimples and creases and folds, he explains that he has taken us for British soldiers, of whom he obviously stands in mortal terror. For Thomas Atkins has a short way with him. He calls a spade a spade, a black man a nigger, and holds that the superiority of white over black is a fact beyond all reasonable argument. Sometimes one almost wonders whether Atkins isn't right.

Mr Hurree Narth is not exaggerating when he beams on us and says, "I thinking your honours are English soldiers. I am personally pretty cowardly fellow. These are very terrible men, moreover. Their dogs also very terrible. Always biting black peoples."

We need have been in no such hurry. "Sir," said the station-master, referring to our train, "she is late. Perhaps one hour late. Perhaps two hours, moreover. God Almighty knowing."

Naturally we asked Hurree

Narth what he proposed to do with us for the credit of his station. By thus throwing ourselves on his better nature and bringing to the surface all that was best there, we did a wise thing.

He was at first full of the dreariest suggestions. "Some gentlemen walking on platforms." "Some gentlemen reading time-tables." "Some gentlemen looking at sceneries."

We told him that we weren't like any of these gentlemen, and that he must try again. He appeared damped, but hope and kindness still beamed in those large spectacles.

At last he called our attention to the pigeons. Although his religion forbade his either killing or eating them, he was no bigot in these matters. As a matter of fact, he had of late been suffering, "Sir, from rumblings in belly." As also had Mrs Narth. Consequently, and strictly medicinally, neither he nor his lady would be averse to trying a little pigeon-meat for their stomachs' sake. So we said, "Lead on."

After summoning a lamp-cleaner and a signalman, to whom he referred as "my menial staff," he took us to the station grain-sheds, where the pigeons battened on spilt grain. Here we had a hot fifteen minutes, and then there were no more.

Mennial staff now armed themselves with fragments of the permanent way, and we were taken to a large well and asked to look in. After the bright

sunlight we could see but little except a quivering gleam of water a long way down. But the well resounded with the cooings and flutterings of troglodyte pigeons.

In went a rock and up rushed a pigeon, towering into the blinding light and away to the fields. Another stone, and three more rocketed out, and so on till all seemed to have flown. But the sounds within the well still betokened that the tenants on the basement flats were yet at home. It was then that the great Hurree set fire to a sheaf of time-tables and dropped it in. This brought up the die-hards in a bunch. By standing well back and taking the sporting shots, the well, first to last, gave some very pretty shooting and a great variety of shots. We furnished our own pot and, we hope, gave sufficient to station-master and staff to allay all abdominal troubles.

The sounds of an approaching train were now heard, but Hurree North assured us of another half-hour, and in addition gave us his word of honour that he would detain her if necessary. He sent us off with his staff, and himself returned to his duties.

In the rough ground round

the station we picked up a hare and a couple of grey partridges. As these animals possess a doubtful reputation as regards the niceness of their dietetic tastes, we made the staff happy with them.

We were about to step into the train when Hurree North rushed up with pen, ink, and paper. An illiterate fellow would have called it a chit, but a B.A. (failed) demanded a "sartifcut," and waved the menials away when those degraded beings showed symptoms of wanting one too. When we asked him what earthly good a certificate would do him, he smiled his slow babu-ish smile, and gave utterance to two cryptic words, "Perhaps, moreover." So we wrote, "Station-master Hurree North has been of the greatest assistance to us when detained at his efficiently run station. He evinced tact, resourcefulness, and initiative on a sudden emergency. He appears to be a very capable and much undervalued servant of the Company. We recommend him for speedy promotion to a sphere more in accordance with his merits." We solemnly signed this drivel, which read much like an old-style epitaph, and handed it to H. North.

II.

By a little arrangement with the guard, the train, in the most opportune manner, came to a standstill where no station

was, but near where our camp happened to be. Everything was flung out of the carriage so as to delay the train as

little as possible. That was a point of honour. We were thus saved a four-mile ride, and enabled to get to camp well before dark.

India is still a land where these amenities can sometimes be practised with the aid of a very little suavity and a few coins. But gone are those still better times when, with a leading wind and a large square sail, a trolley would carry one at the rate of knots to one's destination. There was a regrettable incident at a bend in a cutting where steam and sail ran into one another. After that sails went completely out.

Our little camp stood just within a grove of mango-trees, on slightly rising ground overlooking six miles of lake. At the far end of this a frosty winter sun was just squattering into the water. The whole place was alive with those delightful sounds that waterfowl in their thousands make at sunset—the solemn honking of geese flying in, the contented quackings of undisturbed duck, and the wild, high, creaking notes of Sarus cranes. Where the lake petered out into mud and rushes, just below us, there was the noise as of a boot-heel dragged out of mud, and away went a snipe.

Behind us, under the trees, were our tents, and in that direction arose other pleasing sounds—the rattle of feeding-buckets, the rustling of horses well bedded down, and the sizzle of fires and cooking. All around the jheel lay flat shim-

mering fields of young wheat and barley, with here and there one of linseed, with its sea of blue flowers presenting an exact similitude to blue water, and, indeed, often taken for water in certain lights.

A servant rushed up and announced that a herd of buck was feeding close up to the grove on the far side. He brought a rifle and cartridges. There was still enough light. So J. took the rifle and I a gun, he to the buck, and I to the jheel in the hope of a little flight shooting.

In an hour we were back in camp. I had heard him shoot once, and he had heard my shots; also the thump that a goose makes when he falls dead on hard ground. J. produced a doe. There had been a few buck, none very shootable, but any quantity of doe, and he had, rightly, shot one of the latter. My contribution was a goose and a few mallard. We laid out the bag according to rule by a blazing fire, which was reinforced to give it heat and heart with cakes of cowdung. In the making of these the village beldams render the lives of their daughters-in-law burdensome.

What was wanted for our larder we retained, and the rest we divided at once among our followers, not forgetting the village headman, who had been helpful, and would now be more so. The bag was entered up, and counting what we had shot at the railway station, now totalled six varieties.

During dinner we decided on our programme for the next few days. We knew the country well, and there were several old friends from the village who came unbidden to offer their services, instead of, as is often the case, absconding so as to avoid giving them. People who live in the middle of plenty such as exists in a duck jheel or where buck abound, but who seldom enjoy it, are ready enough to help if they are assured by experience of having their fair share of game. Only, the man who shoots it must not only say that they are to get it, but must himself see that they do get it. Otherwise the domestics will grow fat, but the men who do the work will get little enough.

We decided to do the jheel next day. Neither of us was very keen on a whole day seated in a cramped dug-out blazing at duck and nothing but duck, and all flying higher and faster than the likes of us cared for.

Moreover, to do a large jheel like this properly, a dozen guns would not have been too many. Still, we felt that we owed at least one day to such a well-garnished sheet of water and to the bag. The day after we would abjure water, stick to dry land, and take whatever it offered. And on the third day we would leave guns behind and try what rifle and spear would produce. We were in-different gun-shots, good rifle-shots, and, if we were not artists with the hog-spear, we were very well mounted, and our horses knew the game.

Three dug-outs were ordered to be ready next morning at 10 A.M., one of them to be at the far end of the jheel. Ten o'clock was a latish start, but it was bitterly cold weather. Though we had warm clothes, our men would have but a thin cotton sheet apiece, and to have had them out earlier would have been cruel as well as useless.

III.

A frost of extraordinary intensity on that night and subsequent ones played havoc with some of the more tender crops. Gone were the beautiful blue fields of linseed, and the yellow pulse fields lay blackened and withered. But neither the water-fowl in their millions nor the land-fowl seemed to mind it. Before the first rays of the rising sun came shooting in amongst our tree-trunks

there was any amount of business going forward on the water, and the duck, as they rose in countless masses, kept making noises like trains roaring over girder bridges. Part-ridges and pea-fowl challenged and screamed in the fields and scrub jungle, and battalions of sand-grouse from far overhead sent down their pleasant rippling notes.

At a little before 10 A.M.

J. mounted and cantered off to join his dug-out at the far end of the jheel, and a little later I embarked in mine. We were to shape meeting-courses, and would forgather about midday and would help one another by keeping the duck on the move.

As we paddled out I found that the dug-out formed the centre of a circle of rufus-coloured heads—red-headed pochard seemed to wall us in. But as we progressed so did the red-headed circumference, and we always remained in the centre and nicely out of range. When I fired a shot the circle would break a little, but it immediately closed up. I could hear J. banging away in the distance, and his birds began and continued to stream over me, very high and wild, for there was no cover whatever, and half a gale of cold wind was blowing. J. and I met at an island which was so fouled by geese that we had to sit in our boats and lunch. The bag totalled about fifty head, chiefly pochard, but it included half a dozen grebe for our lady friends' toques. Our cartridges we tactfully refrained from counting. In-different shots are happier so. After lunch J. sailed away campwards, and I in the opposite direction. During the afternoon I worked the small amount of snipey ground there was, and found the snipe all on their toes ready to off it the moment human boot touched the mud of their

swamp. Once off they never came back.

Gladly I left the boat and cantered on J.'s pony back to tea. But we replenished cartridge-bags after this, and went out to our appointed places for the evening flight.

Even when standing shivering waist-deep in water—and here we were on nice dry land just on the edge of the jheel—there is something infinitely fascinating in waiting for the flight. Never does tobacco taste better, and seldom does a man feel such a much better fellow than he really is, or that the world wags so much more merrily than ^{it} really does, than during that quiet half-hour which should be allowed before the first arrivals. Before one is no prospect of hours of weary waiting in the dark. An hour and a half, and the best part of that likely to be pretty busy, is the utmost that is profitable—say from set of sun till an hour after full darkness sets in. Even if there were no bird life to watch, and no expectation of those thrilling sounds as fresh arrivals begin to pour in, that quiet sitting after a long day in a buffeting wind would have been well worth while, and profitable both to soul and body. But at this hour the jheel is a very Fleet Street for life, sound, and movement; and about the stir and business on the water there is a certain homeliness and peace.

A pied kingfisher, one of the hardest of all bird-workers,

was still busy close by me (as he had probably been since sunrise) when I took my seat. Hovering, apparently, with great exertion, he had plopped into the water twelve times in twenty-four minutes. Twice only had he brought back to his thorn-tree a little fish cross-wise in his beak, and had jerked it dexterously end-ways and swallowed it. He was already poised for the thirteenth effort when I had to turn away to face a rushing sound behind me. I started shooting eastwards, and continued thus, using the last of the light in that direction, till I found it better to take the birds that flew and silhouetted themselves from and against the glowing west. Then, when this glow died out and the full moon was well up, I turned again east, and took them against the shine of the moon. There were busy minutes when one gun had far more than it could cope with; then idle intervals, then hurricanes of birds from every direction at once.

J., on the far bank, was busy, his gun stabbing the growing darkness with fire spurts, and making no end of noise.

Had one not been shooting, so bright was the moonlight one could have sworn that it was as clear and good for seeing as daylight. But it wasn't. For though one could hear the rush of coming birds and eagerly stared towards it, they were now only visible from just before the vertical

till just behind it—a fitting mass of shapes that blurred the stars and leapt mysteriously out of what seemed a good light to disappear as suddenly into it. Two barrels into each lot, and sometimes a downward rush and a heavy thud or splash as a bird hit land or water. Faster and faster they came, and then slower and slower. The jackals, who never miss their chance, were busy along the shores gathering the wounded birds (and, alas! there must always be some) of the day's shooting. These cripples all make for the shore, and those that the hawks leave the jackals get.

The best of the flight was over. The pied kingfisher had finished for the day. So did we. We gathered the fallen, which were chiefly mallard, with a few geese, the main flight of which would probably come later. We laid out and entered up the bag before dinner. In addition to the six varieties of the day before, we now had four more—to wit, grebe, snipe, a bittern, and one miscellaneous, which was a king curlew: total, ten varieties. In addition, J. had seen an alligator, which is a very frequent denizen of large jheels, where these are within alligator-walking distance of some big river. I had seen a school of otter, and we had both seen what we thought was a bustard. We resolved to look closer into the matter with the help of glasses on some future occasion.

IV.

This was Algoo's tale. Algoo was an old man who had crept up somewhere near the fire after dinner, and had coughed in a suggestive manner several times before we noticed him and bade him draw nearer to the warmth. Though he was very, very old, there was something about Algoo that bade us stay him with a flagon of rum (a very small one), and await results. He began at once to speak of Beeskark Sahib. There was no explanation of this Beeskark, no telling us as to who, what, or when he was. All the world must know of this Demigod. But we gathered that he had been a great hunter of boar in an infinitely remote past, that he called "all us black men" his "little bastards," that his little bastards loved Beeskark Sahib as no other man had ever been loved. That his tongue was a red chilli, and that he beat them often very hard. Out of respect for us, Algoo could not repeat all the pet names that tripped so fondly off Beeskark's red chilli. "For, indeed," said Algoo, "he was our father, and why should not a father beat his children and call them what he likes?" And Algoo had been his companion and shikari for many years.

It appeared that Beeskark occasionally dallied with meaner forms of the chase, but that his real business in life lay

with the hog-spear, the horse, and the wild boar. No rider rode like Beeskark; no horses were like his horses; no man, in short, was like Beeskark. He was a Bahadur, which is Indian for "hell of a fellow."

"For, look you," continued Algoo, warming to his theme, "between the thorn jungle of Raisa and the sandhills and grass of Bhoora the sahib killed three boar in one run. Without pausing he killed them, first one with a single thrust, then another, and then the third, each with one thrust only. All heavy boar, their tushes so long"—and here he chopped his left wrist with the edge of his right hand—"and so high"—here he indicated with his hand a height of not less than five feet. "I have looked at your honours' horses. They are good horses, large and good, but geldings or mares. Not such as Beeskark Sahib rode and killed the three boars on. His horses were little ones, Arabs, off the race-course, and entires."

Other pæans followed. The sahib had killed three panthers—not in one day—and had not come off scathless; and he had lost a horse over each. One, bitten through the windpipe, had died at once; the others had succumbed to clawings less rapidly. "But what did the sahib care! He had plenty." And the sahib had tackled the great boar of Rumna

on foot, the boar that would listen to nobody, and had been hunted for many years. With Algoo's help, and after wounding him on horseback, the sahib had killed this angry and obdurate boar with his spear in covert.

It may be explained that a boar who will listen to nobody is not one who runs about with both fore-trotters clapped to his ears, but one who defeats for long all reasoned efforts to kill him—a contumacious stiff-necked boar.

In time Algoo would have depicted his hero as laying into tigers, and, possibly, dropping his elephant with a single thrust behind the elbow. Luckily, however, he dozed off here. When he awoke we again stayed him in the hope that he might bring us to the grand finale. For a whole-hearted thruster like Beeskark might arrive at literally anything, even to a seat on the Viceroy's Council.

But he never really arrived anywhere.

"As I was saying," continued the old man, "there was nothing that the sahib feared. No, nothing. Nothing stopped him or his horses once they got going after a boar, not even the dull-dulls (quicksands) in the river-bed, which can eat elephants. And he always hunted alone—at least, ever since some other sahibs insisted on the dull-dulls being flagged and had let a boar go, by riding round, and not across, black cotton soil. Beeskark

was much grieved at this. He and his horses would swim any water, and Algoo had seen them swim out into the middle of the river after a boar that turned and met them half-way across. Fairly they had met, and the boar, with a foreleg pinned to his chest by the sahib's spear, had been unable to swim, and was drowned."

When the floods were out once and no riding possible, the sahib had followed a boar in a boat, explaining to Algoo that on horseback or on foot, with a spear—yes; but from a boat—no. He had then jumped on to the boar's back, seized him by the ears, and drowned him. Often had Algoo warned the sahib that the pitcher would go once too often to the well, and that the habit of killing wounded boar in covert on foot would mean trouble. "But, look you," replied the sahib to the sagacious warning, "when I spear them on horseback it is the horse that does it and gets cut; not I. Good sport for the horse, but for me—it's egg without salt."

"As I was saying," rambled on the ancient, "before I became Beeskark Sahib's shikari, there was one Alayar, a Mussulman. This Alayar was a good shikari, else he had not served the sahib for long, but he was a bad man. He took half the money paid to each beater always. That was custom. No one minded much. He did many other tyrannical things as he became richer. The

sahib paid well and gave enormous buksheesh after a good day. When a man becomes rich he can do as he likes. Every one fears him. He can hire witnesses, as many as he likes. Two men, with whom Alayar had a quarrel, he implicated in a murder. He hired corpse and witnesses and the best lawyers. One of the men was hanged; the other went overseas. Alayar's house was burnt down once or twice. That was all we dared to do. At last one day Beeskark Sahib had beaten the coverts near the village here. Six boar had been killed. In the evening, after weighing and measuring the pig, he did as he always did on reaching camp. Even before he had seen to his horses, he always set all the beaters in a row—there were a hundred of them—and, beginning at one end, he walked down the line and hit each eighth man on the head with his stick, saying, 'Stand up, dishonest one,' or 'Stand up, Son of Shame,' or 'Stand up, Five Farthings.' Just as our mothers speak to their children to keep away evil spirits. Then, when every eighth man was standing up, and when every man had given up the gun-wad which he had as a token, the sahib would call for the bag of rupees and, walking down the line again, would give one rupee to each of the standing men, and say, 'Two annas for yourself, Fat-head, and two for each little bastard on your right. See to it.' To odd men he would

always give the exact amount in small change. And he would always reward any one who had done well.

"He always did exactly the same every time he paid the beaters, and always used the same words. And so he did that day.

"Of the six pig, he gave the smallest to his syces and the rest to the beaters. Then he said, 'Now go and eat.' And we went away to the village. It had been a long hot day—a very hot day—but we were all contented and went to the village.

"There Alayar met us and took from each man one anna out of the two that each had received. That was nothing. It was custom. But he then ordered us to hand over the five pig as well. He said, 'These pig are mine. I shall now sell the meat to any one who wants it at two annas for two pounds.' Now, since early that morning we had been beating, and it was May. At midday, when the sahib had stopped hunting to let us drink water, Alayar had also taken half of the sack of parched grain which the sahib always provided for us to eat and so become strong for the afternoon's work.

"One of our women who was present crept away in the dark and went to the sahib's camp. No one but a hungry woman with children would have dared to do that. There, falling on the ground near the table where the sahib was having

dinner, she wept aloud. He called to her to go away. But, being a woman, she continued to weep and to throw earth on her head and to cry aloud over and over again, 'Half our pay—half our parched grain, and all our pig! Father of my father, we are all dead——'

"At last the sahib understood what was the matter. His face became white like the table-cloth with rage. He told the woman to go quietly back to the village and to send me. And when I came he said, 'Algoo, I have long known of this Mussulman's wickedness. Be a man now. Do not fear. Get three other witnesses, and I swear that we will finish the rascal. You shall then be my shikari. Then who will hurt you?' I returned to the village. But all were afraid. I said, however, to three men that the sahib had ordered them, name by name, to come forward and give evidence, and that if they refused, perhaps they knew what the sahib would do to them for I did not. Then they became more frightened of the sahib than of Alayar, and said, 'But did the sahib name us by name?' And I said, 'Yes, by your names and your fathers' names.'

"Presently the sahib rode bareback into the village where we were all gathered. First he said to the smith, 'Get your fire going and heat me an iron bar.' Then he ordered any strangers that were in the village to depart. Then he sat on the well and said, 'Now we

will hold a little trial.' After the three witnesses had given evidence, many more men and women came forward and spoke against Alayar—both as concerned that day's doings and many other crimes he had committed. But the sahib said that this trial was only for defrauding beaters of their pay and their meat.

"He then asked Alayar what he had to say, and Alayar hung down his head and said nothing. The sahib then said that he would pay the beaters again, but that he wanted a good deal of money. To Alayar he said, 'Go and fetch three hundred rupees.' And Alayar said he was a poor man, and had not got so much money in the whole world.

"'Look you, Alayar,' said the sahib, 'I take out my watch. I give you fifteen minutes to bring the money, only now I shall want four hundred rupees. Several men will go with you who will help you. And if you don't find it you will go and look for it at the bottom of the well. Go.'

"When he came back with the money he found the beaters seated for payment, and the sahib paid out the money in the usual way: the whole four hundred rupees.

"The smith then said that the iron was hot. We bound Alayar hand and foot. And the sahib branded him on both cheeks. And Alayar screamed.

"Then the sahib said, 'We have now finished with this

Soor. Let him go to his house. To-morrow he will leave the village and the district. See to it, Alayar, that you never come back. If you do you will leave the village again by way of the well. Then you will certainly never return.'

"This," concluded Algoo, "was indeed justice. No delay and no bribes."

The old man ran down here like a clock that wants winding. We applied the key, and hoped to obtain some clue as to who this heady hog-hunter might have been. The proper rendering of "Beeskark" might be guessed with a fair amount of certainty by those who are conversant with Indian mutilations of British surnames. To arrive at an approximate date we tried to get hold of Algoo's age. He assured us blandly that he had never kept reckoning of that, but that he must be "some hundred and forty years old," and that all the foregoing happened when he was a very young man. As to whether Beeskark was soldier or civilian, Algoo could or would give us no information. As to his appearance—why, yes—he was like a tiger. His teeth were white and sharp, and he ground them usually when talking and always when angry, which was very often.

He wore spectacles did this demigod, and, sometimes after periods in camp, a short beard. The colour of his hair was like that of that horse yonder (a bright chestnut), and his eyes were like a water buffalo's

(china blue), of aspect very terrible—even to other sahibs. Once—and here the old clock started ticking in earnest—Algoo was seeing him off by train somewhere after a spear-running in which dacoits and wild-boar were rather mixed. But Beeskark had killed them all. The sahib's clothes were bloody and the train late, the Babu station-master amiss in some way, and the sahib, of course, very angry. Eventually, and garnished with beard, spectacles, and a leash or so of hog-spears, he had bundled into a carriage grinding his teeth. Yes—very terrible to see. In the carriage sat two other young sahibs. They looked at Beeskark for a moment, and then, opening the farther door, had softly vanished.

In endeavouring to add up these descriptions, and so to evolve a picture of Algoo's demigod, we seemed to stray into regions heraldic, for here we had a tiger, mane and beard Gules, holding a spear Proper, behind which were eyes Azure. The whole Rampant and with teeth Gnashant. Others might work Beeskark out to a different result, but for ourselves we were convinced that such a man as he answered perfectly to this description and to these tinctures. None other would have fitted such a hell of a fellow half so well. We should have been glad to have seen him at work on one of these little blood Arabs of his.

"And what became of the

sahib in the end?" we naturally asked.

"One day," said Algoo, "he went away, telling me to go as usual once a month to the post-office to receive a money-order for my pay until he came back. But he never came back. For a year each month I went and received my money-order, and then it stopped. After that there was no more trace of him, absolutely no more trace."

"But did he never write?" we asked.

"Write!" said the old man testily, "of course he could write—and read too—quite easily. But who was I that he should write me letters or I that I should read them?"

Nevertheless he esteemed me very highly, very highly indeed. There are no more like him nowadays. No, none. Perhaps they can't catch their pig for all their big horses, or perhaps they fear quicksands or black cotton soil." (He touched us here: we both loathed sand that was quick and soil that was black.)

"So they come and shoot ducks instead." Algoo looked at us very hard here. The iron went right home. Lest we made hasty resolutions to smash up our guns and abjure all sport but pig-sticking, we said good night to Algoo, venturing to hope that Beeskark might yet turn up. "No," said Algoo, "I think he is dead."

V.

Turning our backs on the jheel next morning and pointing for the river, we hoped we might arrive there. But as there were eight miles of sporting-looking country to traverse, and we had with us horses and spears as well as guns and rifles, it seemed probable that there might be distractions. It would therefore be unwise to reckon on getting anywhere but back to camp that night.

Buck were in any quantity. We were never out of sight of them, and the harm they were doing to the crops must have been immense. Everywhere were visible those frail platforms, some eight or ten feet high, from which children by

day and old folk by night scared the marauders from their own fields to those of their neighbours.

Trapping the buck was, of course, out of the question, because only the trapping caste can do that, and these people only paid occasional visits and hardly abated the nuisance. Demarkation, of which we hear so much these days, is as old as the hills, and results in the buck living on the people instead of the other way about.

We said we would shoot a few, and we said unwisely.

We could never get within 400 yards of the buck. So we borrowed two passing bullock-carts, and, seated in them, we

were able to get within easy pot-shot range, just dropping off for the shot. But this was a most unsporting method, and, moreover, amongst the hundreds of buck visible in every direction there wasn't a single notable head. So we shot a few for the people with us, and then put our rifles away. We were, however, told that if we wanted big heads we must go to some Mooram, or high gravelly ground fifteen miles away, and we made a note of it.

Some scrub jungle yielded a hare or two, a few little bush quail, who got up with a most thundering and startling whir, and some grey partridges and pea-fowl. Of two little jheels that lay across our route, one was stiff with teal and the other with snipe, the first allowing us just two barrels apiece, and the second a hot ten minutes ere we had taken toll and the survivors quitted. But, as we were going on, sand-grouse began to pour down on to the now vacant teal jheel. So we went back to it. The sand-grouse were of the small variety and thirsty. Drink they would, and pack after pack came pouring down out of the sky on to our heads. A good many entered the bag. Of a snipe and a hawk which swooped on to him, which we downed with a right and left, we picked up the hawk lying dead on its back, with the snipe, also dead, held up aloft in its talons.

While resting at a village

there was a casual mention of wolves in the neighbourhood, and a keen youth, to whom we promised a king's daughter in marriage, said he would show us the covert where they sometimes harboured, though he wouldn't promise that we should find them at home.

Now it is the ambition of every one to ride down a wolf, but not many have the luck to try, or if they do, to succeed, for the Indian wolf is the devil to run, and will stay out any but a very fit horse. Still, wolves have been thus killed, but only after desperately gruelling runs and on suitable ground.

This was quite a snap show. A dozen beaters were put into covert, a small wood with almost impenetrable undergrowth. They beat it anyhow, chiefly in single file along a narrow path. We waited at the far end and well hidden.

Luck was in. We hadn't waited ten minutes when out lolloped a big grey wolf. Had it been twilight he might have passed for a large leggy dog. He headed away apparently for nowhere, which was very obliging and singularly careless of him. We allowed him any amount of law, for to have given a hint of our presence would have sent him straight back to covert. We must have let him go nearly a mile, and he was clearly visible in the young crops, strolling along as if the whole place belonged to him. We then trotted quietly after him, keeping well apart.

He responded to this soothing treatment, and continued trotting away from covert. In this way, and never nearer than 800 yards, we nursed him along for another couple of miles. Then we started in.

It was a featureless run, over a country as flat and as green as a billiard-table, and not a toss in twenty miles of it. Such runs are happy ones, for they have no history. But it was a long run; how long we never knew, for landmarks there were none, and we had not looked at watches on starting. But a great many miles slid away under our horses' bellies.

Two things only were tested: the staying power of our horses, and judgment on our part in adjusting the speed to the horses and in making it a little too hot for the wolf.

He let us get on terms with him at once, just as that much faster animal the blackbuck will. Then, secure in his speed, he quickened his stride, and kept a score of paces ahead of us. The going was ideal for our hooves, but perhaps a little less so for his soft pads. Gradually he brought up his left shoulder, and came slowly round towards covert. But that was five or six miles away now.

Then we saw something that we liked better than his stern. And that was his tongue. A little later his stride lost a little of its rhythm—no faltering yet, but a tiny fault of metre, and there was more

tongue. Then his grey sides grew darker. His tongue was fairly out now. A mile was left us, and we could afford to wait no longer. We called on our horses and started pressing.

It was at once evident that the wolf had shot his bolt. He started jinking. It was now a question only as to who should get the spear. Once and again J. thought he had him, and once and again did I. Finally, J. rolled him over clean and dead as the wolf crossed him with a nice 400 yards clear in hand to his covert. Pipes and timbrels! But we were pleased!

Whether our horses could have done it under a May instead of a December sun I do not know. I doubt it; and the going would have been iron.

To the keen youth we gave, not a king's daughter, but the Government reward for a wolf, with which he was infinitely better pleased.

It was getting towards sunset when we reached the river bank. The far bank lay three miles away. Between the two was a sea of high yellow grass and dark green tamarisk, reed-beds, swamps, creeks, and sandy nullahs. Amongst these the river, shrunk to its cold-weather dimensions, found a tortuous channel. The whole is called the kadir, or river-bed, and there is more game and greater variety of game in a kadir country than in any other kind. Its chief inhabitant is the boar,

but there are meaner animals, such as the tiger, panther, stag, and antelope, and great store of wildfowl. We were actually overlooking the happy hunting-grounds and preserves of the X Tent Club. Chasing pig here, even had it been

possible now, was debarred to us.

We laid out the bag as usual before dinner: two little plump quail side by side with the lean wolf, besides the buck, hare, snipe, and teal. The varieties now totalled fourteen.

VI.

Next day we had a ride of fifteen miles and a shift of camp into another district. According to programme we took spears only, for we were to try some jungle-covered hills for pig.

Before starting on the ride we had a good look round for the bustard, and we viewed him pacing his fields as solemnly as a policeman paces his beat. Both are large animals and both are dignified, but the bustard is more dignified than the policeman. We viewed him first through glasses, but when we attempted to get closer and view him over sights he would have none of us. He ceased pacing and flew away. So we rode away.

A few hours later our beaters were strung out from the base of an isolated hill, up the side, across the top, and down the other side, and were slowly moving towards us who were concealed on the plain. We will drop a veil here. It does no good dwelling on distressing details. One hour later a large sow lay dead at J.'s feet, and J. had decided as a professional man (he was a doctor)

that she was a barren sow, and therefore killable. He made this statement *ex cathedra*, and it is ill arguing with a doctor when he takes up that sort of attitude. I ventured, however, to ask him what were the proofs of his victim's sterility. He replied, "First, I object to your calling her a victim. Next, she is barren even to the eye of a layman owing to that tuft of hair. And thirdly, she rose at me before I speared and bit me through the boot here, bruising the skin but not breaking it."

True she had. But whether that were mere dialectics or not I could not say. So I said nothing. As the polite Oriental writes when he can't think of anything more to put in his letter, "To say more would savour of disrespect."

But later, when J. was in his bath, I held a modest autopsy on that sow, and confronted J. with the evidence, and said, "One gold mohur, please," the usual fine inflicted by a Tent Club on a member who kills a pig that is too small, too light, or of the wrong sex.

He paid it and was silent. It paid the beaters nicely, and something over for myself.

We thus added one more variety to the bag, in which

the sow figured as "Pig 1, unmeasured." And we proposed to add another variety on the morrow, for we had seen Ravine deer during the beat.

VII.

But we spoke too loud, and the Ravine deer, or Chinkara, must have heard us, for next day these beautiful little gazelle, usually to be found just when and where you expect them, were not, and our bag was fated not to contain a pair of those graceful lyrated horns, the natural colour of which (the grey-green of moss or lichen) taxidermists have a fondness for painting black and varnishing.

We spent a pleasant casual day, part of it by a river where, if there is nothing else to be seen, one can usually have a shot at an alligator. The sun was just a nice heat to bring the saurian out to bask, and when we laid our glasses on to a distant sandspit we saw a small bevy of the snub-nosed kind lying on the sand. We were able to get close up, for the brutes lay under a steep bank. One of them lay with his mouth agape. We had no buns with us, so we fed him a bullet in the neck, and for once in a way he lay stone-dead. We tested deceased's armour-plating with a hog-spear, which will pierce most things. To our surprise the rough and seemingly impenetrable hide on his back was

fairly easily pierced, while the smooth belly-skin was proof. It is the latter skin that tans into such good leather.

Farther on we came to a great stretch of high dry grass, far too high to see to shoot in, and yet it looked as if it must hold black partridge. We were pondering as to what was to be done when a couple of pad elephants hove in sight and bore straight down on us. Their mahouts told us that they belonged to a local squireen, and had been sent out to cut grass for thatching. Their elephants were not gun-shy, and were often used for shooting. We were soon up and passed twice through the grass, getting a few black partridge (francolin) each time. A fine sporting bird this, quite unlike his grey cousin, always ready for gamesome flight and with as hearty a challenge as any I know. One of the elephants, a female, was, or pretended to be, terrified when ordered to pick up a dead bird. She approached it almost on tiptoe, craned her neck, put out her trunk, nearly touched the bird, and then started back. She was again brought up to the scratch and hit pretty smartly

on the head. This time she picked up the bird, but dropped it at once, as if it had been red-hot iron. Again she was brought up, and, after screwing her courage to the sticking-point, picked up the bird, but instead of handing it to her mahout, flung it right over her head and ten yards behind her.

She got a sad hammering for this and a shower of abuse. But we had to use her male companion as retriever.

We had a most enjoyable loafing day, but it contributed only a few black partridges to the bag. We were not fallen so low as to count, even among "Miscellaneous," the alligator.

VIII.

Next day we were for the high ground, where we had been told all the shootable buck were gathered. It was a long ride there, but we had with us that most excellent convenience, a riding camel. This saved us all the bother of carrying rifles and food, and provided us with a horse-holder while we were shooting, and a means for bringing back the venison when we had finished. During breakfast a servant reported that the "harrial had arrived," by which he meant that a flock of green pigeon were about, and that we had better shoot them. The harrial is a bird, not of beautiful colours but of beautiful nuances, so delicate are his mauves, yellows, greens, greys, and buffs, and so delicately merged. He has a most tuneful whistle. Gourmets say that he is good to eat. He is much too good to shoot, say I.

We set out on the long ride a little sceptical about this gathering of old buck, dwelling apart from the young buck and the does. We had never

heard of this being done by antelope. But it was an excuse for a ride on a beautiful day and for seeing something of the country. Two hours at a steady trot, with ten minutes' rest after the first hour, brought us there. From out of the flat expanse of green fields rose a bare gravelly rib, uncultivated, which, four miles farther on, again sunk to the level of the plain. At its broadest it might have been a mile or so across, and it had a command of forty to sixty feet. Certainly there were a lot of buck on it and not a doe, so far as I remember. As to size there was nothing to make a song about.

There is a sameness about buck-shooting that soon palls. The venison is poor eating. The old buck himself outrages every law and theory of protective colouring, for the black-and-white of a rifle-range target are not more pronounced and conspicuous than the black-and-white of the mature buck. As if aware of the hopelessness of trying to hide himself, he chooses the most exposed

ground as his habitat, where, if he can be seen by his enemies, he can see them equally well. Then he offs it, bounding high into the air every few strides, probably to get a wider view.

When crops are high enough to cover the squatting villagers, who all work in this position and are invisible, the fellow who persists in buck-shooting is doing a very wrong thing. I have sinned myself, having fired at and killed a buck with a bullet that passed on through a belt of trees, then through the walls of a grass hut some six hundred yards farther on, through the clothes of a man grinding corn inside the hut,

and finally flattened itself against one of the grindstones. The man, not the least resentful, but perhaps a little hopeful, brought the bullet to me. Whatever I paid him was a dirt-cheap price for an experience which I have never forgotten.

Our best head that day was not quite twenty-three inches. To J., I think the taping of a buck's horns was always an operation fraught with painful memories. Long ago we had discovered that he was measuring his buck round the spirals, and not straight from base to tip. It was some time before he heard the last of it.

IX.

To Lieutenant - Governors their thousands, to Viceroy's their tens of thousands, but to us our modest hundreds. Let these, however, be well mixed. For that way to us, and, we suspect, to many others, lies true happiness.

We had still a few more days' shooting, but as they added no varieties to the bag, so they will not add to these lines.

We finished up with sixteen varieties, counting all the dif-

ferent kinds of teal and duck as one variety only. A grebe is doubtful, but we counted him in and did not include him in "Miscellaneous."

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"Sir," said the failed Bachelor of Arts, as we shed a haunch of venison for himself and some gobbets of swine's flesh for his staff, "I now remembering your honours always. Moreover, I am praying for your honours' welfare night and day."

THE TOP OF EGYPT.

To those who climb the steep bordering cliff of our valley, even to the daring ones who fly over it, the Egyptian desert presents nothing but a series of dreary limestone plateaux stretching to a far horizon. Hardly a dweller on the Nile suspects the existence of that fantastic chain of mountains which the homeward-bound travellers see, jagged and blue against the sunset, as they leave the Red Sea for the Gulf of Suez.

Yet from the great bend of the river at Kena, the head of "Slope Hill," as the Admiralty charts call Jebel Sha'ib, the highest mountain in Egypt, may be seen any clear dawn, though it soon fades away in the heat-haze of the morning. In all the vast circle that an eye may scan, a hundred miles in every direction from his 7000-foot summit, here at Kena alone it rests on palm-trees, minarets, and the houses of men. For the rest, a great cantle of the Eastern Desert of Egypt, much of the Gulf of Suez, the grand Sinai range, the entrance to the Gulf of Akaba, the whole width of the Red Sea with the Arabian mountains beyond, should all be visible—a landscape bright with every hue but green, distinct in detail to the furthest distance, but lifeless as the fields of the moon.

Once in twenty years or so

snow lies for a day or two perhaps on our Egyptian summits, and I myself have seen from the Sinai shore the tableland of the Qalalas glittering across the Gulf of Suez. But though from the earliest times vague stories of a snow-topped range have drifted down from Ruwenzori to the land of the Pharaohs, no glimpse of a snow-clad peak at their very doors appears ever yet to have been caught by the *fellahin*. Still, to the inhabitants of Kena, one of the hottest towns in the world, even the name of ice must have been unknown till recent years. Never, till the present year, so Arab tradition assured us, had the foot of man trod the crowning summit of Egypt; yet where man's courage had not availed to lead him, sisterly affection had found out a way, and fifty years ago the first ascent had been achieved by a woman. Selima, a Bedouin girl of the Ababda, in searching for a half-witted sister, had climbed the mountain to the topmost needle, and seen the *Rif* (Nile cultivation) across seventy miles of desert. The unfortunate half-wit was taken up dead later from the foot of some precipice. People who had known Selima in their childhood declared that she had never married, but spent much of her life wandering about the hills looking for *shu'eib*, a rare plant with medi-

cial properties. Indeed, the mountain's real name was Jebel Shu'eib, after this plant, though now it has been universally corrupted to Sha'ib, the "Old Man."

From the days of my first visit to the Eastern Desert some twelve years ago, I cherished the hope of one day standing where Selima had stood, and on a first attempt, not long after the war, I all but succeeded. The actual crest of the mountain is formed by a group of *aiguilles*, not unlike the fingers of a giant hand pointing the way to heaven; and, after an eight-hours' struggle, I found myself alone, tired, and pressed for time, on the ring-finger of the hand, wondering how on earth I was going to get on to the summit of the middle finger, still some 70 feet above me. Unable to discover any solution in the time at my disposal, I came down a sadder but a much wiser man. Thinking it over, I came to the conclusion that I must arrange for plenty of time, companions, and an Alpine rope, and try, try again. A golden piece of information came to light on the way down, when we found a series of rock-basins filled with rain-water, which would allow a party to camp the night on the mountain. It does not rain every year in the Eastern Desert; and thirst, more than anything else, is the obstacle to be feared in our desert-climbing.

The season after my failure

was spent scrambling among the better-known and easier summits of the Sinai Peninsula, and many a wistful glance was cast from Umm Shomer and Katherina at the "Old Man" over a hundred miles of wilderness and sea.

Then came 1921-22 and friendly rivalry. A stalwart Frenchman, M. de la Roche, renewed the attack, but had to turn back from much the same point that I had. Most of his time had been wasted by bad desert guides, but his party brought back the important news that rain had filled the rock-basins to overflowing.

Meanwhile a six-months' exploration had given me plenty of opportunities to test organisation and pick and choose companions. No Europeans accompanied me, but the quality of my Bedouin helpers, as the event was to show, left nothing to be desired. The guides and porters were all from the Ababda, who are not Arabs at all, but African in origin, and cousins to the Hadendawa, Bisharin, and the rest of the "Fuzzies." Here we were on the very limit of their territory, and half-expected to meet some of their northern neighbours and ancient enemies, the Maaza, true Arab invaders from the Hejaz. I could find no one at all at Umm Dalfa, the nearest well to Sha'ib, who had any first-hand knowledge of the mountain, and was compelled to fall back on the experience I had gained on my first at-

tempt. A local youth, Salem, who as a child had known the famous Selima, was engaged to guide us back to the Nile Valley. In return, I promised to show him the way up Sha'ib.

Riding towards the desert spring of Umm 'Anab on a preliminary reconnaissance, I had an excellent view of the whole southern face of the Sha'ib range, about eight miles long. He displayed three main summits: the western, a grand solitary cone; the central, a thicket of savage *aiguilles*, which I called "Selima's darn-ing-needles"; and the eastern and highest, a false colonnade of seven or eight gigantic smooth pillars, themselves unclimbable, but perhaps accessible by the chimneys between them. This main triple-crowned range fell steeply away to the valley below with slopes of 40° to 50°, but from the eastern summit extended two lesser ridges eastwards, the paws as it were of a sphinx or lion *couchant*.

The whole mountain was composed of a beautiful red granite, which weathers spheroidally—that is, the surface peels off in great sheets, leaving the rock beneath as smooth as the ice-worn surface of more familiar peaks. Most of the spurs and buttresses are steep, with dangerous holds, owing to the decayed rock not having been removed by this rainless climate; while the ravines and gullies, though attractive channels of progression to the novice, would frequently be impassable

through smoothness, were they not choked with immense boulders, over which one scrambles. As it is, one is often held up by some dry waterfall. The surface relief of this red granite country depends greatly on the extent to which it has been seamed by volcanic dykes. Where the rock of these is softer than the granite, narrow canyons of wild beauty have been produced by weathering, while the harder dykes stand out in fantastic needle-crowned ridges. In their absence, the granite weathers into vast red horns and domes of terrifying smoothness as at Qattar.

On the occasion of our previous attempt, I had gathered from an old Bedouin that direct attack on the hanging valley between the paws of the sphinx was rendered impracticable by a precipice, but that there was a way into this valley over the right paw, used by charcoal-burners, who, owing to the high price of fuel in the Nile Valley during the war, had stripped even this secluded valley of all the 'irn-trees it possessed. Further, that this tree, the 'irn, whose bark the Bedouin make use of in tanning their water-skins, had thus become totally extinct.

Next day, 24th April, I pitched my camp beside some white-blossomed Moringas at the very foot of the mountain, and, reasonably confident of the result, set out the next morning to the assault.

In advance scouted Awdid Nasr, a sturdy Ababdi who had

already stalked successfully one ibex and five gazelles with my *shot-gun*. To give him a fair chance with the game, the main climbing party followed at a decent interval. My headman, Muhammad, was there, eager to avenge the defeat of two years before. Then came Awdid's partner, a fine shock-headed boy called Aly, and the local rogue, Salem, who will no doubt act as guide to future parties. Least but not last, ran the white terrier Fox, captive of my bow and spear, and former pride of an Austrian 5-9 battery in Palestine. On the former occasion, our mascot had slumbered peacefully at Umm Dalfa; now with him in our midst we could hardly fail. Besides these, five porters came with us, bearing amongst other articles a large theodolite, with which I hoped to take angles from the summit. Last of my helpers was a one-armed lad who carried my water-bottle to the foot of the main pillar. He was full of pluck, but the chimney from there on needs a pair of arms.

From the Moringa-trees, two gullies, or, as they say in Cumberland, "rakes," led on to the right-hand paw of the sphinx.

Salem showed us the charcoal-burners' route, which led up a spur immediately to the west of the "rake" (the eastern) which we had used before, and so saved us a lot of clamoring over large boulders. In an hour and twenty minutes we were standing on the *col*, where a little charcoal strewn

on the ground showed where the burners had rested their loads.

Then down into the valley of fig-trees, former home of the mysterious 'irn, which we named the Wadi Abu Samyuk. Continuing up this, we soon came to our first difficulty, a dry cataract in the watercourse, with the direct route blocked by a huge boulder. This we evaded to the right, and hauled most of the baggage up by the rope, but the porters who carried the two theodolite boxes on their shoulders found this the most anxious part of the mountain. When all had surmounted this obstacle, we halted to wait for the ibex-hunter, and whiled away the time with games. Aly engaged the sturdiest of the porters at "cock-fighting," and as they were both firmly seated in the gravel of the dried-up watercourse, neither could push the other over with his toes. Vainly they strove, the older and stronger man smiling at the youth's efforts to upset his balance. Aly said nothing, his eyes flashed, and he wore a fighting face worthy of the Fuzzies who "broke a British square"! In fact, he pushed with his feet till he sprained one of his toes so badly that at the moment I thought it was broken. Dismayed at the possible loss of my best guide, I tried to part them, but the perfervid Aly would not be parted. Finally, when he was quite exhausted, his imperturbable opponent overturned

him gently in the sand with a vigorous push.

Awdid now rejoined empty-handed, and we ascended past the brimming rock-basins. Here Shadly, the theodolite-bearer, took the opportunity to fall in, but neither man nor instrument was damaged. Above the pools, we left the ravine to avoid the series of dry cataracts in its bed, and ascended by the spur on the right.

At the point where our former route dropped down into the Wady Abu Samyuk near its head we camped early in the afternoon, finding more water a few yards below us in the gully. The local *jinn*, a beautiful pink snake with red spots, was drinking from it.

I spent the rest of the daylight with the plane-table on top of a neighbouring *aiguille*; and later we told strange tales round the camp-fire of mysterious lights that shone from the Old Man's summit by night, of the sparks that fly from young camels' fur when you stroke them the wrong way, and of the fishermen's camels on the Red Sea coast that eat fish-heads like their masters or the ponies in the north of Norway.

Next morning, with nothing more exciting than toil and trouble, especially for poor limping Aly, we gained the foot of the final colonnade, about 250 feet high, which forms the actual summit. As one looks at one's left hand, with the fingers close together,

the way to the tip of the middle finger lies up one of the two chimneys on either side of it. So looked Sha'ib to us, and leaving the five porters who formed the carrying-party, we commenced an assault on the chimney to the west or left of the main finger. Here we were soon involved in difficulties, and progress became so slow that I gave the word to abandon the attack, feeling that our time would be better spent on a reinvestigation of the eastern chimney which we had attempted before. This intuition proved a happy one, although an initial mistake in recovering our old route led to Fox's first experience of being roped. He protested volubly.

Thence we reached the *col* between the two fingers, nothing separating us from the summit but a bare smooth boss of granite sloping at an angle of perhaps 60°. This ended just above our heads in a steep lip 20 feet high. Taking the circular top of the main pillar as a clock-face with noon as north, we were now at 3 o'clock, and seemed likely to stay there.

Salem it was who first espied a subsidiary pillar joined to the main finger on the north, and up the crack between the two, from which a small bush sprouted, a sort of race now took place. Here we halted again to recover our breath and look at the summit, now only some 40 feet above us. Sitting on a stone wedged between the two needles, I

saw, some 15 feet up, a crack, and, to the right and overhanging a 70-foot drop, two cavities one above the other in the dome. It seemed possible that an active fellow might, holding by the crack, manœuvre his body into the lower of these two hollows, and I threw out this suggestion to Aly as the tallest and most adventurous of our rather stunted party.

After discussing the matter, we all felt the situation was not being improved by our staring at it. So the sturdy Awdid, the ibex-hunter, proceeded to set his feet on my stone and crouch against the pillar, so as to form a step for his comrade. First he glanced at the 70-foot drop, two inches from his right foot, and then at the eager Aly, who was tying the rope round his waist, all lameness now forgotten. "Well, I'd rather Salem tried it!" quoth matter-of-fact Awdid, looking at his friend. Salem was the bumptious local youth whom no one had got very fond of. "Rubbish," replied Aly, mounting to the assault. As Awdid now rose slowly to his full height, so Aly's black mop of hair and slender arms rose towards the coveted crack. Would they reach? No, they wouldn't! Hope and fear alternately now fluttered through my heart. In desperation Aly clung to something invisible, and Awdid pushed at his heels with might

and main. Now his right hand was in the crack, now his left; a scramble, and he was in the lower hollow. Thence he quickly reached the second, which was almost a cave. A check—he couldn't get out over the lip. On again, he has found a hole in the roof, and fallen back through it! It seemed an hour before he finally wriggled up through that hole and out on the smooth red dome. Now he vanished from our sight, but a loud scream of triumph soon proclaimed that Aly Kheir of the Hareinab Ababda had set foot where no man had ever trod before.¹ We almost fell over each other down the crack, past the bush, and back to the smooth eastern face, down which the rope was already coiling. "Make it fast, Aly!" we yelled. "I can't; it is all smooth!" he replied. At last, when the full length of 90 feet had been run out, Salem tied the end round his waist and dashed at the lip about 20 feet above us. Aly pulled with a will, and we stood by to catch—if Aly got tired. Salem hung a moment at the lip, then over. For the rest of the way he walked with but the slightest pull from Aly above. I followed, then Muhammad. Now came the dog, tied by Awdid to the end of the rope. Poor Foxy yelped as he swung in the air at the lip. Then, at my whistle, he proved four legs to be better than two by scampering up

¹ Selima, if she ever got up, was a woman.

the rest with the rope trailing in a bight behind him, while Aly laughed too heartily to be able to haul in the slack. Last came the sturdy ibex-hunter, and six beings now peopled the roomy summit.

As before, the distant view was rather hazy, and I abandoned any idea of bringing up my theodolite. The Sinai hills showed through a shroud of mist, but neither the Arabian mountains nor the Nile could be seen. Everything near at hand was sunk to insignificance, even the great black cone of Kohila and the severe milestone-like Qattar, and all the Eastern Desert lay at our feet like a map. It was almost the centenary of the birth of Egyptian mountaineering. Ninety-nine years before us, almost to a day, on 28th April 1823, James Burton, at his second attempt, vanquished the solitary peak of Gharib, most beautiful of Egyptian mountains, an exploit which has never been repeated. Except for some doughty climbs by Dr John Ball in the south-eastern hills near the Sudan frontier, little climbing has been done in Egypt since.

I took the men's photograph and scribbled our names on a paper. Salem protested at this as witchcraft likely to prejudice future rainfall. Now came the problem of finding stones for a cairn. This we solved by craning over at the south-western corner (seven o'clock), and pulling them out of a fissure. Exploration of this

crack followed and showed a route down (possibly Selima's), leading in a spiral round half the pillar, and ending about 150 feet down from the summit at two o'clock. Aly and Awdid let us down by the rope, and with Fox in their arms, speedily rejoined us by this new route. We found the eastern chimney harder to get down than to go up, and I strongly advise any future adventurer to make his base camp at the head of Wady Abu 'Irn, which separates Sha'ib from the Umm Dalfa range, and climb the mountain from the north-east. By that route he will have a straight climb of about 4800 feet to the main pillar, and avoid the difficult chimneys on the southern face. But there may be no water by the way. No great hardship in winter perhaps, but quite putting the climb out of the question after the beginning of April. Our descent was uneventful, save that Awdid and Salem went off with my shot-gun and some home-made slugs and came back with an ibex. All feasted royally that night, especially Fox.

Three days later, from the high black crest of Nuqqara, I looked down on a widespread landscape of peaks and ridges, veined with valleys of golden sand. Seaward, white horses thronged the broad blue levels, and the gale covered the fringing reef below my feet with surf. Yet, on our crags, not a breath stirred, and the sun burned down from a cloudless

vault. The clear weather had come at last ; forty miles away, Sha'ib and his pinnacles lay on the northern horizon like a vast red cathedral. Through the telescope I could descry high on the domed top of the highest pillar of his awful ultimate colonnade something infinitely small, the badge of his servitude. "Look!" said I to shock-headed Aly, "there is our cairn!"

Our "Old Man," I know, is but a dwarf beside the snowy Alps or the mighty Himalaya, while a bold Cumbrian climber would laugh our clumsy antics to scorn. Everything has its place, however, and ours is the desert. What though our

audience be few and scattered, our stage lies wide from Suez to Suakin, from the muddy waters of Father Nile to the clear green depths of the sea. There Sha'ib towers a giant over the graceful peaks of Umm 'Anab and the solemn minarets of Qattar. But, bold as he stands, he has his lords and masters, and for whatever space we six may yet tread the desert highways, the children shall stare and point from the Ababda wicker hives, or the black tents of the Maaza. "There are the men, and there runs the strange dog, who walked on the bald scalp of Sha'ib, where Selima walked!"

G. W. MURRAY.

AN ITALIAN "SUDATORIO."

THE Grotta Giusti of Monsummano is a resort known to few Britons and Americans other than those resident in Italy. The rheumatic of other nationalities—French, Danish, Swedish, Austrian, Polish—disdaining the facilities nearer to their hand, meet at Monsummano, lured thither, it may be, by that distance which lends enchantment as well to baths as to views. Germans overran the place before the war, but not now; Italians, in common with most other peoples of Europe, turn a cold shoulder upon the German. Until the present scribe was urged thither by a Siena doctor he had never heard of the Grotto Giusti; and lest any who read are in like case, be it said Monsummano is but two hours from Florence on the line to Viareggio. It is called a "bath," but this does not properly describe it. Better adopt the term of that Siena doctor and call it a "sudatorio," which is unlovely but correct: most correct. It is a "sweating place."

The Grotto is a cavern in the hillside, such a cavern as occurs in limestone in any country; with the difference that it is hot with the heat of waters which from the bowels of the earth rise in the likeness of rude wells. The roof suggests fossilised sponge, and the sur-

roundings were as volcanic action and damp had made them until man laid cement path, built up chasm, bridged, and erected hand-rail, and cut away stalactite for the passage of those not exceeding five feet six. New arrivals of taller growth, feeling tenderly their skulls, wish they had cut away a little more; for, electric light notwithstanding, the roof abounds in booby-traps for the unwary and half-awake. Early morning is not the time to make acquaintance with strange caverns.

The place grows hotter as you go farther in; at the section labelled Purgatorio—they never fail to apply Dante in Italy—the temperature may be sixty-five. In the natural chamber, shapeless as hole in loaf, at the extreme end, a hundred and eighty metres from the entrance, the thermometer marks a steady 33° C., say 91° F. This is the Inferno. It owes its superior attractions to the pit below—a pit hid from fearsome eyes by the wooden grating which makes the floor of half its area. This is where we, the patients, clad in white drill gown or pyjamas supplied by the management, sit and perspire. It is furnished with garden seats, footstools, and a kitchen clock. Here we sit round and contemplate one another and the clock. All required of us is

that we perspire. We do, and very thoroughly.

The Grotto opens at eight, and for an hour is reserved to us who are guests at the hotel, which has been built against the hillside—annexe, as it were, to the cavern, with which it communicates by tunnel or passage that we need not go out of doors. After nine come the visitors from without: even from Pistoia, where they have no baths; and from Montecatini, across the vale, where they have, but prefer the Grotto. In summer, which is the season, two hundred patients daily spend the prescribed hour in Inferno.

Quietude, born of the somnolence which is excusable in people just out of bed, prevails at first; then neighbours, discovering a language in common, exchange courtesies in undertones. Anon one speaks of symptoms: common ground has been reached; tongues are loosed, voices rise, the owners growing eager and descriptive. Others, breathing the thick air, punctuate thought with glances at the clock, and sigh at intervals. We cannot read—the vapour obscures one's glasses—nor play Patience: the drip from above would spoil the cards. We can only sit and do that for which we are here. I drip, you drip, they drip. My own thoughts in cheerful mood run on Lower Burma after the monsoon when the climate is its muggiest, and heat apoplexy; in despondent hours, upon earthquakes and

my sins. Earthquakes are not mentioned aloud in the Grotto: it would be tactless to speak of earthquakes here.

Sometimes when he has nothing else to do, the bath-man comes from his cubicle in Purgatorio and delivers an encouraging oration. The bath-man is venerable and emaciated; bare of foot, in his long white gown he appears as a prophet employed in a steam-laundry. It could not be otherwise; for fifty years he has spent eleven hours a day in the Grotto with an interval for dinner. This has also narrowed his outlook upon life, and he has but one topic—the place wherein he has spent his sub-earthly career. He will tell of the cures he with these eyes has seen. Catching such words as *meravigliosissimo*, *incredibilissimo*, and like stimulating polysyllables, I suspect him of quoting from the advertisements one sees in the railway stations. I do not know Italian. Like other ignorant Britons, recognising two words in a sentence, I guess three more, and apply the doctrine of probabilities to the remainder; and kind people expound when the bath-man becomes interesting.

He means well, but thus to cherish us with hope is not necessary. We with our eyes see a newcomer brought in a carrying-chair, who, after a few days, appears on crutches; then with sticks; last, to resume his quality as a biped. As a variant from cures the

bath-man narrates the story of the discovery of the virtues of the Grotto. It was an idling goatherd who, exploring the cavern without a candle—goatherds in their vocation are seldom supplied with candles,—took a rash step and fell into a deep crevice, and stayed there till found thirty-six hours after, and drawn out with ropes. Our sympathies go out to that goatherd. We wonder what he was like after thirty-six hours of it: whether there was enough of him left to enjoy the life-long immunity from rheumatism which was the reward of his sufferings and made the reputation of the Grotto. There are *lacunæ* in the bath-man's information: he cannot tell us, for example, whether they began by keeping people here for thirty-six hours at a stretch and discharging their victims as cured; whether it was only by repeated hunger-strikes that patients got the sentence reduced to an hour a day. The bath-man glides away from such questions to tell us of the eminent and famous persons who have been restored to health here since that pioneer goatherd was extracted from the crevice—cardinals, princes, dukes, and Garibaldi. Again this is unnecessary, for their names are graven on tablets of marble—Italy is addicted to recording events and doings of all descriptions on tablets of marble—set in the wall at the public entrance,—tablets which at first sight bear de-

pressing resemblance to memorials of the dead; but the dates refer only to the visit of the eminent or famous person.

Nobody professes to understand how the atmosphere of the Grotto achieves its results. The bath-man speaks of it as the Magician's Cave; the Faculty speak of radio-activity; and it appears to me that one is as satisfying as the other, leaving us just where we were. But what does it matter when the Grotto *does* eliminate rheumatism? Let us accept its blessings and refrain from curious inquiry. All it asks of us is that we shall drip. We drip.

The assembly is never the same for three days together. Patients pay their twelve visits and go; new ones come. Thus it is that the social atmosphere of Inferno varies. There are days when we sit looking at each other as if waiting for some one to start a round game; days when silence is the rule and we devote ourselves to ourselves, with the result that we appear engaged in the weaving of spells—an appropriate occupation in a magician's cave. Here is a spare woman massaging earnestly a favourite knuckle; there a stout man flourishes assiduously a hand in the interests of a stiff wrist; there a lady, murmuring what sounds like a charm, manipulates an elbow. A large man by her side is making grimaces expressive of pain that should elicit sympathetic

inquiry; but we all have our own pains, and the Grotto does not bring out the tenderest side of our natures. I overhear the whispered comment that the grimacing gentleman has forgotten his false teeth this morning. We drip. The roof drips.

Now and again there appears among us a spirit dominating and communicative, who regales us with a minute and searching account of his sensations, of medical mystification, of personal experiment. He holds us in thrall with intimate detail. This provokes reprisals and comparison of notes. We have it on high authority that the proper study of mankind is man. In the Grotto it is man's interior; and interiors are discussed with Continental frankness, blend of childlike simplicity and anatomical knowledge that should bring the blush to the cheek of experience. What these rock walls have heard about people's insides!

Sometimes it befalls that a new patient is brought in a carrying-chair by the bath-man and his assistant, and set down in our midst as he were something for us to look at. We must look at him planted helpless under the electric light, focus of all eyes. His advent has a silencing effect. A certain dignity attaches to arrival in a carrying-chair; the person so brought is a serious case, and as such, we feel, of high invalid rank. There supervenes a tacit understanding

that he, as accepted head of invalid society, should speak first. But he is silent, sorrowful. He will speak though. The bath-man, inconsiderate, set him down with his back to the clock, and speech is inevitable. We knew it! He asks the time, and stares incredulous, learning he has been here but four minutes. His question breaks the bond of silence that enchained the Inferno, and conversation is resumed. We speak of those cures *meraviglosissimi*, involving early disuse of carrying-chairs.

On occasion the electric light goes out, leaving us to the kindlier illumination of one candle, kept burning against this contingency in a crack in the rock wall. The light, says the bath-man, bringing more candles, is apt to go out on Sunday when they are making *reparazioni* at the power-house. It does not disturb us. Indeed there are patients who maintain that that one candle is all we need; and truly few look their best in bath attire, head swathed in towel, and very moist to boot. But tastes differ. Patients there be who are at the trouble to have out a photographer from Monsummano to take their portraits in the Inferno by magnesium light.

How is the place ventilated? Here are we, one hundred and eighty metres down, in, under the mountain; and the air hot, thick, oppressive though it be, has no taint of humanity;

only a faint aroma of disinfectants in the early morning when we first arrive. I have tried all over Inferno with a candle: living rock walls, the roof like the inside of a turtle's shell with abnormal rugosities, nooks, crannies, corners, and the floor over the grating; and nowhere the faintest quiver of flame betrays crack or outlet: and the temperature never varies.

Strangers come to see the Grotto as a curiosity. For these there is Paradiso, to reach which you turn sharp to the right from Purgatorio. Paradiso is cool, for this corner, deeper than the rest, has near it no hot wells. Here may be seen various natural bas-reliefs and masks, such as take shape in every cavern where damp operates on limestone. Dante's Beatrice is here. You might not be able to find her without the aid of the bath-man, and when pointed out you wish the lady had not fallen backwards over a rock to make so bold a display of bust. Garibaldi is here; the bath-man says he found himself for himself. Do not criticise. Garibaldi, we know, had all the modesty of the truly great, and this self-discovered bas-relief proves he was without personal vanity. There are other silhouettes or profiles much admired by the bath-man, but for the mere patient, anxious to go in and get it over, the attractions of Paradiso are soon exhausted. It remains, however, to see the Lago di Limbo at the bottom

of that slope on the left as you go toward the Inferno. The lake is a black, still, forbidding pool. Dante might object that his conception exceeded twelve feet by ten, but let that pass. I think the bath-man has picturesque ideas of his own concerning the Lago di Limbo, but he does not disclose these to patients. His to encourage: to hint at bottomless pits might alarm.

The hands of the clock have crawled round to nine, and the long hour is at an end. We rise, bow (carefully, having regard to the treacherous irregularities overhead) to those who, having come in late, are staying to complete their sixty minutes, and, still dripping, make our way along the cement path to Purgatorio, where in their cubicles attendants wait to replace our clinging white drill with hot sheets and blankets. Swathed in these, a Franciscan cloak over all, we are escorted back to bed, there to be covered severely up and lie in melting mood for yet another hour. After which, freedom.

Freedom here means loafing—at all events till the cool of the late afternoon,—and this is an ideal place for it. The hotel garden makes for indolence with its ample shade and comfortable chairs. Moreover the shade is that of large timber, uncommon in Tuscany, and grateful to the eye weary of those trimmed and barbered palms we know so well. Here we have eucalyptus, sycamore,

chestnut ; bamboos, of course ; climbing roses in profusion ; and a wealth of shrubs, flowering and otherwise. Here we sit to recover from the ordeal, reading, writing letters, working, gossiping, idly watching the pigeons stalk among the trees, or thin cats making sport with the lizards. By the way, is there in all Italy a cat of reasonably comfortable figure ? I never saw one that was not thin as a rake, nor a cat that did not devour bread with avidity. Or we lie smoking, to lend appreciative ear to the southern nightingale that sings all day and far into the night. A shy bird is *D. philomela*—shy even among birds in Italy, where all (save the swallow and martin, under special protection of the Madonna) show well-found distrust of man. Only a bath guest with time on his hands can afford to acquire eye acquaintance with that little fowl like a diminutive thrush, whose song is that of a highly-trained blackbird. I sat about the hotel garden for ten days before I caught ever a glimpse of him.

But the bell for *déjeuner* is music hardly less sweet in the ear of bath guest than the song of the Sprosser—I would that a name less harsh be devised for him,—and it rouses like a bugle-call. We are enjoined to eat little before we go into the Grotto ; and we make up for it at breakfast, or lunch, whichever you choose to call it. Myself, I make it

both, for there is lost tissue to replace, and the wine of this region is good.

After *déjeuner* more loafing, for the days in June are hot, and after those two early hours few are minded for anything else ; then, fortified by an early afternoon tea, the energetic seek exercise. There are walks about Monsummano. More than 1100 feet above us, on the hill, steep and sterile, is the original town with its wholly ruined castle and half-demolished walls. The place is nearly all ruins now, but enough of the inhabitants remain to require a church to themselves. New Monsummano lies a mile away, round the base of the hill. Its features of interest are the post office and bank, so we go there rarely. Beyond vine-clad downs to the south-east is another hill-top village, Montevettolini, compact within walls perfect as when raised a thousand years ago. These old hill villages inspire day-dreams, thoughts of the life in days when town warred with town, no greater war being on hand ; and the free companies, captained by such as our fellow-countryman, Sir John Hawkwood, led a gay life of impartial plundering. Walled hill-tops, with stout fellows to keep them, were safest then. For a long walk, to be adventured on a day when we don't go to the Grotto, is Montecatini di Val di Nievole (in common use we omit four-fifths of the title), also on its hill-top, look-

ing down upon its modern namesake in the plain. A contrast, I warrant you! The devout seek Montecatini *alto* to reverence the skull of Santa Barbara of the Tower, patron saint of the townlet, which is the chief treasure of its church. More pleasing is the view from the walls.

The stout fellows who kept watch and ward in old days are here still, but they work in the fields. "Italy is the heart of Europe," runs the saying, "Tuscany is the heart of Italy, and the Vale of Nievole is the heart of Tuscany." In other words, this Vale of Nievole is the most fertile spot in Europe; and you might seek far for one more fertile or more closely cultivated. Not a square yard that can be brought under the spade is left untilled, and the cornfields, ribbed with vines, lend the landscape the aspect

of one boundless market-garden. This does not confine you to the highroads; on the contrary, you may travel for miles and never set foot in the dust. In Italy, as in Ireland, the word Trespass is unknown; and so you respect his crops the farmer greets the stranger on his land cordially as a guest. The whole countryside is meshed with cart-track and path on which to wander at your sweet will. Higher up the hills are clothed in woodlands wherein reigns solitude, for neither foreign bath guest nor peasant ranges so far. The charm of our surroundings lies in the fact that they are either cultivated or as nature made them. Monsummano has not yet arrived at the stage of trimming and grooming the country about the Grotto; and those who know the place pray that she never will.

E. W. D. CUMING.

PESHAWUR, A CITY OF THE PLAIN.

BY SIR A. HAMILTON GRANT, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

ALL night the train had rattled through the dusty darkness, past Gujranwala and Wazirabad, where high-pitched cries of "Musalmān pāni-pine-wallah" disturbed incipient slumber; past Jhelum and Rawalpindi and Campbellpore—until in the small hours the rattle became a reverberating roar as the train pounded over the dizzy Attock bridge between the cliffs of the Indus gorge. With sleepy eyes we peer out of the right-hand windows northward to where the moon glints on the welter of racing waters below and on the graceful outline of the old Moghul fort. To sleep again, until with a jerk the train pulls up at the Peshawur cantonment station, that most unworthy northern terminus to the railway system of the Indian Empire.

Who can forget their first impression of Peshawur—the sharp bite of that morning air, the strange guttural speech of the porters on the platform, the greenery of the wide roads, the dark framework of the encircling frontier hills with snow-capped peaks peeping above them in the far distance, the dust and bustle of incessant military activity, the endless strings of great hairy camels, the endless lines of

clanking mule-carts with the mules trying to ride each other off, and the streamers of mist lying athwart the bounteous Vale of Peshawur?

So here we are once more on the old blood-stained frontier, with all its charm and all its horror. What a strange land of contrasts and extremes—extremes of heat and cold, of beauty and squalor, of gaiety and sudden death, of brutal crime and amazing valour, of plenty and poverty, of hospitality and meanness, of bursting health and wasting sickness, of loyal friendships and bitter blood-feuds, of common-sense and black superstition, of the Old Testament and advanced political agitation, of the rusty *jezail* and the 6-inch howitzer!

After an excellent breakfast of *bachwa*—that admirable little fish which, contrary to the habit of Indian fishes, has no stray bones to choke the unwary—of curried fowl and fried eggs, capped with cold melon from Kabul, let us at once revisit the City, for it is in the City that the romance of the frontier has its vortex. And for old sake's sake, instead of a motor let us hire one of the still famous Peshawuri tongas, with its black-hearted pony and voluble driver. Note his

smattering of Tommy's English, and the chrysanthemum stuck geisha-wise above his ear below his black *pugri*.

Spinning down the Fort Road past the trim gardens, past the gate of Government House with its British sentry, we swing over the railway bridge with the colossal masts of the wireless station on our left. A short while ago an untutored Mohmand, who had come in from his mountain home to Peshawur for the first time, asked a passing orderly, who happened to be a bit of a wag, what these masts were. "Don't you know?" said the orderly. "The Prince of Wales, the son of the great King, is coming to India, and these are the tent-poles for his tent here." Some tent indeed!

On we roll to Mul Chand's shop, just outside the Kabuli Gate—officially superscribed the "Edwards Gate," after the great Sir Herbert; but, though Sir Herbert's fame is still green on the frontier, the gate remains the Kabuli Gate. Here in Mul Chand's shop are gathered the spoils of Central Asia—carpets from Panjdeh and Turkestan, from Persia and Transcaspiæ; astrakhans from the steppes of Asia and Afghanistan; stone-martin skins from Bajour; snow-leopard skins from the Pamirs; jade from Western Tibet; brass-ware and china-ware and all manner of curios to tempt the collector, and draw money from the globe-trotter's pocket. But we

must not spend our all here. We must keep something for Haji Safdar Ali, who generally has a carpet to beat anything of the kind in Peshawur. The Haji is a notable man, now one of the city fathers, an Honorary Magistrate of unexceptionable standing; but he, like most, has had his troubled days, and been tried for his life for murder—a curious romantic murder, with incantations and black magic—and acquitted. We push on through the Kabuli Gate, up the famous Quissakhani or story-teller's bazar, where already, even thus early, clusters of people show that the professional story-teller is at work. On the right is the Municipal Hall; on the left the notorious Afghan Post Office, the focus of much dark plotting on the eve of the third Afghan war. Shorn of its official status, it is now but the Trade Agency of the Amir and his Government.

Examine the crowd and you will see an amazing variety of type. For it is here that the flotsam and jetsam of the Middle East is thrown up—wild Pathans from Bajour, grim Afridis, stout rosy-faced Ghilzais, men with strange caps from Gilgit and Chitral; mul-lahs with oiled and crimped beards from Yusafzai; Hindu money-lenders; Awans from the Salt Range; traders from Panjdeh and Bokhara—until the Soviet Government throttled all trade—an odd Arab or Parsee or Armenian, or may be

a Chinaman; and a host of others, with a sprinkling of British soldiers and English sight-seers — and Russian refugees.

Turning to the left we pass through the hammer and clatter of the coppersmiths' quarter, all working for dear life and making a din like pandemonium. Behind that shop on the left, with the green and buttercup bowls, they make the well-known Peshawur pottery in the most ramshackle factory imaginable. At that shop on the right, with strips of cloth graven with golden storks and other figures, they make the Peshawur waxwork. Yonder is a fine display of *lungis*, pale blue or green shot with silver — the favourite Pathan head-gear. On through narrow streets with tea-shops on either side, great brass samovars hissing in the corner and groups of bearded tribesmen sipping green tea and passing on the gossip of the border. Here are hatched many political plots; here are arranged the details of many a daring raid. On through the *Kotwali*, and the silk market with its gay wares; on through the money-changers' stalls, where the collector may hap on rare coins of ancient days; on through the open square of the Hastings' memorial, with the high stuccoed houses of the Hindu Andar-shahr looking down in purple pride on the huddle of low shops below. Round to the right past the Cunningham

clock-tower with a glimpse down narrow side-streets, with gabled houses almost meeting at the top — streets that remind one curiously of Florence or perhaps of Old Edinburgh. On up the hill to the massive gate of the Gorkhatri — where the adventurer, General Avitabile, lived in the days of Sikh rule.

We ascend to the top of the Tower, and stand amazed at the glory of the view that spreads before us in the glistening autumn air.

At our feet lies the City with its teeming squalor and stately minarets, and all around the great Vale of Peshawur, emerald and mauve and pink and brown, encircled by the black foothills with the great shoulders of snow uplifted in the far beyond. Immediately below stretches a wilderness of roofs, with the roof life of the poor caged women in full play. There a woman squats cleaning brazen vessels; there another is busy spinning; others are gossiping, suckling infants, mending clothes, cooking — all screened from their neighbours in their roof-pens by high mud and lathe walls, unable to see or be seen by the world outside. Here is their only taste of God's fresh air; here they live and move and have their being under nine feet by six of sky. Here are they born, give birth, and die. What a life! But for the most part they ask no better, for they know no other, and the drab

monotony of existence is from time to time coloured by domestic strife, interminable argument of lawsuits or vendettas --and it may be by illicit love at the risk of death or mutilation. Why, it may be asked, has our enlightened Government so long tolerated such a state of society? Well, the East is hoary in its conservatism, and you cannot either by sword or pen alter custom consecrated by centuries. Education, enlightenment, improved standards of living, may in time break down the *pardah* of those cruel mud-walls, and bring sweetness and light to those pitiful lives; but I doubt if it will be in our time.

On many of the roofs are boys too, and young men flying pigeons. With a whirr of wings a great cloud of birds rise and sweep gracefully round and round, until at a signal from their master they slowly descend and resettle on the roof from which they rose. I have never mastered the rules of the game, but there is great competition among its devotees. Other boys are busy training fighting quails or fighting partridges for prospective contests. Holding the bird in the right hand they place the left hand under its feet, and induce it to give a kind of little spring which develops leg muscles so essential to victory. This is a favourite sport on which great sums are often wagered.

It is curious how huge pre-

tentious houses stand side by side with the most sordid hovels. There is the mansion of Sethi Rahim Baksh, whose family ran the trade with Bokhara till the Bolsheviks ruined it. That great building on the outskirts is the residence of Rai Bahadur Karam Chand, banker and contractor, and has more than once been the objective of daring Afridi raiders. That imposing edifice on the left is the house of Yusaf, a man of large fortune. There is an element of humour in the fact that recently a certain well-known member of Parliament, who visited India in order to see for himself the brutality and high-handedness of our administration, and for this purpose desired (to start with) to avoid official hospitality and live with the people, was sent by his political friends to stay during his visit to Peshawur at the house of this gentleman. I am afraid that neither the legislator nor his lady found their *habitat* or the society inspiring. It was at a time when the general political unrest in India had begun seriously to infect Peshawur, at all times inflammable and prone to violent outbursts; and there was considerable danger in the advent at this moment of a British political firebrand, however sincere in his motives. For the frontier has its own special dangers in this matter. Internal political unrest is not on the border merely a question of internal

law and order. Political excitement not only dangerously affects the credulous and impetuous people of the border towns and villages, but it also reacts at once on the adjacent tribes and on Afghanistan. Indeed it is not too much to say that the third Afghan war and the consequent tribal risings were the direct result of the political excitement that was manifested in the Punjab disturbances. I am happy, however, to say that, thanks to special precautions, on this occasion our friend Paget, M.P., did no great harm. A few schoolboys went on strike, and thereby lost some valuable months of study; and there were indications that he considerably modified his preconceived views before leaving the shores of India.

There is no building of real architectural merit in Peshawur; but in the distance the Fort, with its massive walls, looks an imposing pile; and the minarets of the mosques lend an air of picturesque stateliness to the view. Some of the Hindu temples too stand out bravely. From that *dhormsal* in the Andarshahr I had the unique experience of expelling a goddess some twenty-five years ago. It was a curious story. A young woman of considerable beauty in the town of Gujrat in the Punjab was suddenly found to be the reincarnation of a revered Hindu goddess. Accompanied by a staff of priests she proceeded

to tour the northern towns, receiving great ovations and doubtless profitable offerings from the Hindu communities. Eventually she reached Peshawur—always seething with the Hindu-Moslem feud; and her procession from the city station to the Andarshahr promptly degenerated into a running fight, in which some seventeen persons were killed and many more wounded. This was intolerable: the ringleaders on both sides were arrested, and a great riot case was instituted; and the lady herself, as the *fons et origo mali*, was, under a wise provision of the Frontier Crimes Regulation, ordered to quit the district. A day or two elapsed, and the lady was still there, holding mass meetings in the *dhormsal*, and determined apparently to flout the order. As City Magistrate I decided that prompt action was required; and taking with me a good force of police, mounted and dismounted, I proceeded through the Andarshahr to the *dhormsal*. The streets and the windows were crowded with excited faces, ready at a moment's notice to join in a fresh outburst should opportunity offer. At the door of the *dhormsal* I was met by some of the priests, who asked what I wanted. I said I had come to speak to the goddess. They said, "You can't come in unless you take off your boots and gaiters." I replied, "If I were a sight-seer I would certainly respect your

wishes; but I am here to represent the law—so stand aside, my friends.” Taking two herculean Moslem policemen with me I entered the vast assembly—where there was a pandemonium of noise—a scene, I should think, not unlike that in ancient Ephesus, when Diana was acclaimed. In a moment there was absolute silence, appalling ominous silence, and it was a toss-up whether that great concourse were going to rise and tear us limb from limb, or whether the prestige of the British Government would hold good. I advanced to the dais, where the goddess sat surrounded by her priests. A well-nourished gentleman in a saffron robe came forward with a show of indignation, and asked me what I wanted. I said, “I would have a word with the lady.” He promptly blocked my way, and said I could say what I had to say to him. I gave a sign to the policemen, who promptly arrested, handcuffed, and removed him. This was the turning-point. It convinced both the assembly and the lady that we meant business; and the noise began again—not acclamation, but excited, nervous, discordant chatter. The lady advanced to the edge of the dais smiling, and I told her she must go. She parleyed, and in the end I agreed that if she went quietly by the next train, in about an hour’s time, I would neither have her arrested nor detain her priests.

All we wanted was peace and quiet—not any interference with things spiritual, so long as they did not menace law and order. She really was a most attractive young woman, frank, courageous, and not, I think, without a humorous appreciation of the strange position to which she had been exalted from a much more human status. She kept her word, and she and her following went off without untoward incident.

These are the brief facts; but if you would read the story infinitely better told, with dramatic force and golden embroidery, I would refer you to Mr. Mason’s admirable novel, ‘The Broken Road.’ One night when dining with me in Peshawur he got the story from me, and you may imagine my indignation and disgust on reading it a few months later in the work he was then compiling. A year or so afterwards I was on leave in London and received an invitation from Mr. Mason to dine with him at the Garrick. Unfortunately I was engaged, and reluctantly had to decline, but I added in jest to my valid reasons that I was doubtful if I could ever dine with a man who stole one’s best stories. His reply was shameless—that he had only asked me on the chance of my having another story of the same kind.

But it is time to turn from the alluring scenes below us. We must leave for another

occasion the story of the plague of 1907 and of the sign of the red hand; of Mussamat Khanum Bibi, that super-Rahab, over whom the gutters of the Chakla ran with blood; of the great fire and the selling of the water; of the riots of 1910; of the disastrous *Hijrat* or Exodus—and the hundred romantic, quaint, and often revolting incidents that come

within the purview of those who have had the administering of this City of the Plain. For such I fear it is. But happily the Lots are many; and though hideous and unnamable vice is rampant, there is a backbone of virile, honourable, hospitable, kindly citizens, whose equal it would be difficult to find in any other city in the East.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE CENTENARY OF FRANCIS GALTON—HEREDITY VERSUS ENVIRONMENT—THE SUBMERGING OF THE FIT—ANARCHY AND FUTURISM—THE REVOLT AGAINST CIVILISATION—THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE—DR CRANE, THE VOICE OF THE COMMON HERD.

A HUNDRED years ago was born Francis Galton, the only begetter of the now fashionable science—eugenics. The facts upon which his science was founded are simple enough. *Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis*, wrote Horace, and Francis Galton, having surveyed the histories of many distinguished families, had no difficulty in proving the truth of the poet's statement. Men, like other animals, transmit their peculiar gifts and their peculiar weaknesses to their offspring. Above all, Galton insisted that mental and moral characters were inherited to the same extent as physical. Nor did he believe that the change in man produced by heredity could be produced in an easier manner by environment. "The laws of evolution," writes Professor Karl Pearson, in his centenary appreciation of Francis Galton, "are open to our study, let us once understand them, and man can elevate man as he has developed his domestic animals—such was the gospel of Galton. Our race dying shall not be a mere stepping-stone for another race to reach loftier things; study how a race can reach higher mental and bodily efficiency, and this knowledge, which Galton termed the science

of national eugenics, will carry your nation forward in the future, as Nature in the past carried humanity forward by a stringent selection of races and a ruthless destruction of nations and cultures. 'Do this and your nation shall not perish,' was Galton's creed, for to him in the last years of his life eugenics had grown to be a faith. Eugenics, he said, must become a religious belief."

It cannot become more than a religious belief. So far as we can tell, the race has not grown in mental or physical stature with an improved environment. We cannot, by taking thought, better the breed of men as we better the breed of dogs and horses. If we wish to increase the speed of horses or to enhance the power of scent in dogs, we can select those among them who are eminent in the desired gifts. As their generations are brief, as horses and dogs come early to maturity, we can watch and test the results of our choice. Above all, we have such control over animals, other than men, that we can model them to our will. A breeder of dogs once boasted that in a few years, by a process of cunning selection, he could imitate any known breed or invent

a new one. These tricks cannot be played upon men and women. Human beings grow slowly to maturity, and if there were a conscious mating, ordered by a bureaucracy, it would be impossible to watch and appreciate the results. Nor, if so monstrously fantastic a bureaucracy were called into being, would it be able to ensure the carrying out of its designs. You have only to imagine a ministry for the improvement of the race, presided over (shall we say ?) by Sir Alfred Moritz Mond, to understand its gross absurdity. The appointment of a Minister of alien blood to watch over the health of Englishmen is ridiculous enough. Were he empowered to permit or forbid marriages, his authority would die in inextinguishable laughter.

We may, then, dismiss at once the possibility that A and B shall ever mate at the command of C. If the race is to improve, the strong and wise individuals of the race must take charge of their and the race's destiny. And to those who consider the examples given in Galton's '*Hereditary Genius*,' it will be evident that the brave and good in the past have prudently chosen their mates. From brave and good parents brave and good children have descended, and Horace is not mocked. Nor is what has been achieved in the past impossible in the future. All that is necessary is that a high ideal should be preserved and respected, that foresight and inclination should go hand

in hand, that the choice of an unworthy mate, man or woman, should be looked upon as a disgrace. "If the physically fitter or the mentally more efficient," writes Professor Karl Pearson, "or still better, those whose stirps unite *both* these desirable qualities, were to resolve to-morrow to form consciously a caste apart, to mate only with their own members and leave adequate progeny; if they were to look upon marriage out of their caste as a disgrace, then that caste in a generation or two would be the aristocracy of the nation, its ruling caste. It would be individual man selecting himself, breeding himself, if Galton's critics prefer these terms, as a domestic animal." Such a process is not impossible. The ruling caste in most civilised countries has been produced by this simple method. The method has but one disadvantage: it produces admirable citizens and excellent administrators; it cannot give us men of genius. They must be left to the gamble of life. They are the divine accidents, which happen we know not how, and for the most part have no other result than their own perfection. Many a statesman has founded an august line. We look in vain for the inheritors of Shakespeare's genius.

So we must leave genius sternly on one side, and hope that the courage and prudence of the nation will produce and protect the ruling caste of our desire. Such rules as have been imposed upon savage tribes and

accepted by them should not be beyond the reach of civilised states. "If a whole community," as Professor Karl Pearson says, "may be outraged by a man marrying a woman of his own totem, may not a community grow up which holds it an outrage when a man of insane stock marries a woman of a mentally defective stirp? If a whole tribe shall insist that one man and one man only, the husband's brother, shall mate with his widow, shall not a tribe possibly arise which sets a stigma on the mentally endowed who mate outside their caste or provide no descendants for the welfare of the community?" Such tribes may arise—in fact, have arisen—all the world over. The intelligent classes have generally been scrupulous in the choice of their mates. A stigma has attached to man or woman who chooses one mentally defective in fact or blood for his (or her) spouse. The ruling caste, in arms or arts, has in the past been attentive to these matters, and when Francis Galton published his 'Hereditary Genius,' he did not so much give us a counsel of improvement as summarise the results which had been achieved by wise men without any conscious counsel either given or received. Nature was doing her work in her own way and for her own perfection.

And now at the very moment when the praise of eugenics is upon everybody's lips, the politicians for their own mean ends are making it very diffi-

cult for the old ruling class to survive. Democracy, the fiercest enemy of civilisation, even of the human race, is doing its work. The foolish cries of freedom and equality, the commonplaces of Rousseau and of that mass of "glittering generalities," the declaration of American independence, have still the power of impoverishing our blood. If we are to be on a level we must be levelled down, and to satisfy the vanity and greed of the incompetent, the competent must be massacred or reduced to impotence. That is why the Bolsheviks butchered the intelligent citizens of Russia—that no wise or good men should survive to put their greed and bloodthirstiness to shame. So far from desiring a ruling caste, the Bolsheviks have murdered all whom they suspected of virtue and talent, and in their busy desire to rid themselves of intelligent competitors, have slain or exiled the doctors, and left the fever-stricken peasants without medical aid. So far on the road of destruction may envy and jealousy carry the knave and the fool.

What has happened in Russia is happening also all the world over. The spite and the anger of those who have fallen behind in the race, and who refuse to see that their failure is the result of natural causes, have inspired the class hatred which is the mark of our age. And the politicians do nothing to check the devastating passion. Rather they fan the flame of the resulting hatred for their own purposes. They are con-

vinced, if they think at all, that a present majority in the House of Commons is of greater importance than the future of the race. At the very moment when they proclaim aloud the paramount necessity of producing an A1 race, they do their best to see that encouragement shall be given to none other than those who may be classed as C3. The useless members of the community are by far the most numerous, and therefore since we enjoy the blessed privilege of universal suffrage, it pays to pamper and to flatter them. We do not ask of the Government that it should take any interest in eugenics. We ask only a fair field and no favour for those whose strength and intelligence may prove of value to the community. The Government, intent upon votes, insists that the strong and intelligent are few in number and must fend for themselves. Their main business is to support in idleness those who either cannot or will not work. So we have arrived at this point of degeneracy, that one class is asked to pay the taxes, and the other class is permitted to squander upon itself whatever money the tax-gatherer can collect. Vast sums are spent upon the education of those who are incapable of learning. Then we are told that the poor children cannot learn because they are not properly fed, because they are not happy in their own environment. There follows a policy of free meals and *crèches*, and when these things have to be

paid for, it is the middle and upper class who are ordered to foot the bill. The deplorable result can easily be foreseen. The citizens whose children are most worthy to be taught, who have transmitted to their sons and daughters something of their own force and intelligence, are asked to bear so heavy a burden of taxation, in order to provide free schools, free meals, and indiscriminate doles for the labouring classes, that they are unable to educate their own children. And thus the class which might still furnish the nation with its ruling caste is miserably submerged, until at last it can pay no more taxes and bring up no more children. Was there ever a more wasteful system devised by the ingenuity of man? We have called upon to govern us the men and women who must be for ever unfit to understand a delicate art, and in order to conciliate the incapables, we have deliberately sacrificed those whose intelligence might have guided aright the ship of State.

That is what democracy may achieve by putting the burden of taxation upon the shoulders of the middle class. As the Bolsheviks levelled down their state by murdering the brave and the intelligent, so shall we in England, if there be not a reaction, get rid of our *intelligentsia* by the process of starvation. The Russian method is expeditious and for the moment effective. Our method, if slower, is equally certain; and if it be persistently applied, it will set a firm barrier against

any improvement in the future. Should a citizen be foolish enough to use his wits or to practise thrift, he will be instantly punished for his effrontery by being asked to support those who in their modesty are content to remain in the gutter. Thus, in their determination that only the unfit shall survive, our Radicals and Socialists are contriving an organised attack upon civilisation. Wherever we cast our eyes, we may observe a settled revolt against law and order. Hooliganism has spread from the streets into the councils of our Ministers. It is long since we heard any protest raised by our governors against the killing of innocent men. The murder of English soldiers or of English women is described consistently as a "regrettable incident," and until a Cabinet Minister perishes by an assassin's bomb, we cannot expect to hear one official voice raised in protest against those who butcher our fellow-citizens. It is true, on the other hand, that the death of an Irish Free Stater, whose own hands are stained with blood, inspires our Ministers to an eloquently-expressed grief. We can only suppose that the grief is for the miscarriage of their own schemes, and may not be taken as a general objection to the ambushing of soldiers. When Michael Collins was following his own trade of assassin with energy and success, his prowess excited but little anger in the breasts of our Ministers. When he fell by the method

which he himself perfected, he was mourned by the compatriots of his victims as a gallant soldier and the saviour of his people. Thus far have we travelled on the road of anarchy. We do not bring murderers to justice. We take them by the hand and to our hearts. And when they who, being true hooligans, have drawn the sword, perish by the sword, our Ministers despatch condoling telegrams, and thus cover by their approval all the criminal assassinations of the past. How, indeed, after our benign treatment of Michael Collins, can we ever with reason bring a murderer to justice? And if the murderer fall by the same weapon which he has used against others, how shall we refrain from mingling our tears with the tears of his friends and kinsmen?

Nor is it only in matters of policy and statecraft that we have renounced all that once we held sacred. In the arts also we have snapped the bond of tradition. Between the youngest of our painters and writers and the past there is no link left. They have no more love of law and order than have our politicians. They would start afresh from the ground, every one of them, as though nobody before them had painted a picture or written a poem. They make the same demand for "freedom" as do the anarchists of Russia and elsewhere, and for them also "freedom" means the absence of restraint, the privilege to invent as many new processes

of art as they think will startle the Philistine. The new processes, whatever they may be, last but for an hour. Futurism slides into an antic of the past while you wait, and the master, who seems to his friends assured of immortality, passes to forgetfulness before the paint on his canvas or the ink upon his paper has had time to dry. To be a master in the newest school you must comport yourself like a savage, and if you do not sink quickly enough into the pit of degeneracy, you must raise your voice in furious protest against the past, and demand the instant demolition of libraries and picture-galleries. To the true modern there is nothing more loathsome than an enforced comparison of his own work with the work of the past.

Thus it is that the under-man menaces us, that we may note everywhere a revolt against civilisation. And since it is well that we should recognise the enemy with whom it is our business to fight, we would commend to all our readers Mr Lothrop Stoddard's new book.¹ That this wise and bitter attack upon the democratic principle should come from America is but just. It is from America that have come also the noisiest pæans in praise of "the people." The wicked maxims, whose repetition by the greedy and ignorant has caused more bloodshed than the egoism of all the tyrants, have been echoed with

the greatest constancy on the other side of the Atlantic. At the very moment of pretending to build up an intensive civilisation, the democrats on both sides of the ocean are inventing means by which their noisy followers shall knock it down. By exaggerating the importance of numbers, by prostrating themselves before any compact body of voters, however dangerous may be their principles, they are doing their best to ensure in the near future anarchy and revolution. As Mr Stoddard says, civilisation is a burden as well as a benefit. It is difficult to attain, and still more difficult to keep when it is attained. It is not a question of money. Look at the newly rich, and you will understand that their wealth cannot buy civilisation. We know what it is when we see it, and yet it is not easy to define. That it has anything to do with material progress, as Mr Stoddard suggests, we do not believe. "Down to a trifle over a century ago," he says, "man's material progress had been a gradual—a very gradual—evolution. . . . With the exception of gunpowder, he had tapped no new sources of material energy since very ancient times. . . . In the year 1800 there was no system of highways which equalled the Roman roads, no posting service as quick as Cæsar's, no method of signalling which could compare with the semaphore tele-

¹ The Revolt against Civilisation: the Menace of the Under-Man. By Lothrop Stoddard. London: Chapman & Hall.

graphy of the Persians, and probably no ship which could not have been overhauled by a Phœnician galley in a moderate sea."

And then suddenly came steam, electricity, and petrol, which gave men a power of movement and action which had not been theirs before. But this power has nothing to do with civilisation. It is in general a curse rather than a blessing. It has substituted restlessness for energy and cunning for intelligence. It has elevated speed to the highest pinnacle of beatitude, and has persuaded us to believe that we have achieved a genuine triumph because we have reached a place which we have no desire to visit in a record time. Because we are intended to walk or to ride upon the earth, it is decreed by "material progress" that we shall burrow underground or fly through the air. The newly-invented processes of movement and communication have made our lives more uncomfortable and less simple, and have retarded rather than encouraged the only civilisation which is worth having. We would cheerfully sacrifice, if we could, the telephone and the aeroplane, and the mere thought of wireless messages brought into every house is enough to terrify us. The worst of it is that the ingenuity which gave us the telephone gave us also high explosives, and made bombs the playthings of the proletariat. And if the revolt

against civilisation succeeds, it will succeed largely because it took the wrong turning towards "material progress," and thus put the weapons of destruction into the cruel and reckless hands of the under-men.

To-day, at any rate, the apparatus of life is far too cumbrous for happiness. We have, through a love of machinery and through setting too high a value upon the discoveries of science, descended from the high level of civilisation which distinguished the eighteenth century. We have put the things of the mind below steam and petrol. Our civilisation is of the workshop and the factory, and thus is easily accessible to its bitterest assailants. Meanwhile, as we have said, the worship of democracy has placed the power of government in hands unfit to control it, and has diminished, by an unfair incidence of taxation and by an easy method of disfranchisement, the influence of the middle and upper classes. Briefly, as Mr Stoddard says, instead of dying off at the base and growing at the top, civilised society is dying at the top and spreading out below. The result of this dual process is, of course, as disastrous as it is inevitable. Drained of its superiors and saturated with dullards and degenerates, the stock can no longer support its civilisation. And the upper layers of the human foundation having withered away, the civilisation either sinks to a lower level or collapses in utter ruin.

Such is the pleasant prospect before the world, unless the human race is resolute to improve itself. Is there any chance of this improvement? The facts are not encouraging. The statistics wherewith Mr Stoddard illustrates "the iron law of equality" may well make the Americans tremble for their future. "Our War Department," write Messrs Yoakum and Yerkes, quoted by Mr Stoddard, "nerved to exceptional risks by the stern necessity for early victory, saw and immediately seized its opportunity to develop various new lines of work. Among these is numbered the psychological service." In other words, they made certain psychological tests, the purposes of which were: (a) to aid in segregating the mentally incompetent; (b) to classify men according to their mental capacity; (c) to assist in selecting competent men for responsible positions. No American can help being depressed by the result of the inquiry. Only $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent were classed as of "very superior intelligence," and of mental age from eighteen to nineteen. Indeed if the 1,700,000 men examined may be taken as a fair sample of America's population, as they probably may, the table set forth in Mr Stoddard's book means that "the average mental age of Americans is only about fourteen; that forty-five millions, or nearly one-half the whole population, will never develop mental capacity beyond the stage represented by

a normal twelve-year child; that only thirteen and a half millions will ever show superior intelligence; and that only four and a half millions can be considered 'talented.'" Could a heavier indictment be framed of democracy and its doctrine of equality, or a clearer proof be adduced of government by the unfit? And if the condition of America is serious to-day, the prospect for the future is darker still. The men of superior intelligence hardly reproduce themselves, and the lower you come in the scale the higher is the birth-rate. As Mr Stoddard says, "intelligence is to-day being steadily *bred out of* the American population." And there are still those who bleat of the unchanging irresistible virtue of the People!

Another inquiry made by the Americans was into the correlation between intelligence and racial origin. Those examined were but the foreign-born men, and they show plainly how the immigrants vary in intelligence. It is a satisfaction to us to know that the English head the percentages of superiority with 19.7, and that Scotland is a good second with 13.0. Ireland can boast no more than 4.1, and Russia is still lower in the scale with 2.7. And yet there is not a man in Southern Ireland who does not brag daily that he is intellectually superior to the English, and who did not complain in those far-off days, when he was properly governed,

that the fault of failure was with the Englishman, a slow-witted fellow, who had presumed to attempt to control the quick wits of the clever Irishman. But statistics are stubborn things, and stoutly reinforce the evidence of our eyes and ears.

Nor can the enthusiast who believes that all the problems of political and social inequality may be solved by equal opportunities of education and training take much comfort in Mr Stoddard's argument. How is individual achievement affected, he asks, by these equal opportunities? "The answer is another striking proof," he replies, "of the power of heredity. Not only is such equality of conditions unable to level the inborn differences between individuals; on the contrary it increases the differences in results achieved." Or, as another investigator puts it, "the superior man seems to have got his superiority by his own nature rather than by superior advantages of the past, since during a period of equal advantage for all he increases his lead." Thus we come back to Galton's opinion, that to improve a race's environment is not to make it physically or mentally worthier, that the only method of raising the standard of a nation's strength and intelligence is to give the best opportunity to increase and multiply, not to the unfit as we do to-day, but to the class which we are now taxing to its ruin, and excluding, as

far as we can, from all share in the government of the country.

Thus the unfit, the men and women whose intelligence is not higher than that of a child of fourteen, have been permitted to engross power and influence all the world over. They see themselves inferior in intelligence to those whom they are able to defeat by mere numbers, and they are smitten by a kind of envy. Proclaiming that they create the wealth of all the world, they demand as their rightful inheritance all that has been achieved by the skill and thrift of their betters. They see in the industry and self-denial which have amassed capital nothing but a crime, and knowing naught of economics or of history, they shout aloud that the *bourgeoisie* is a robber-band, and that they themselves are the sole possessors of wisdom and virtue. Having clamoured many years for the right to out-vote all other classes in the community, they find that the ballot-box moves too slowly, and demand of their leaders, greedy and interested men, the bloody revolution of the sword. "Fear and wounded vanity," as Mr Stoddard says, "thus inspire the individual to resent unfavourable statutes, and this resentment tends to take the form of protest against 'injustice.' Injustice of what? Of 'fate,' 'nature,' 'circumstances,' perhaps; yet, more often, injustice of persons—individually or collectively (*i.e.*, 'society'). But (argues the

discontented ego), since all this is unjust, those better-placed persons have no 'right' to succeed where he fails. Though more fortunate, they are not really his superiors. He is 'as good as they are.' Hence, either he should be up with them, or they should be down with him. 'We are all men; we are all equal!'" Such is the train of reasoning, and the under-man, having said that he is as good as they are, presently boldly declares that he is better. Nor will he profess gratitude for the favours that are showered upon him by the politicians. He looks coldly at the right, which is now his, to outvote others. He is indifferent even when he is told that his voice is the voice of God. He would if he could proceed to instant rebellion, and the failure of Bolshevism has no lesson for him.

And he finds fighting on his side the man whom Mr Stoddard calls "the border-liner, the man who cannot *quite* make good," and "the disinherited, the man innately capable of civilised success, but cast into the depths by social injustice or individual wrong-doing." And lastly, there fights in the ranks of the rebels against civilisation the "misguided superior." This familiar figure, who ought to know better, is the victim of some exasperation or another, and unless he keeps his fanatical head, after the cold manner of Lenin, he speedily becomes the victim of those whom he hoped to

lead to a red victory. Moved by such purposes, led by such dangerous rascals, the under-men attack the civilisation which is the work of centuries, and care not if in the general ruin they and their friends perish also.

The prospect is less gloomy in England than elsewhere, because our percentage of intelligent men is higher than it is among our neighbours. We have also practised from the beginning of time a wholesome habit of reaction. But we too are for the moment in the hands of the unfit, who, with Mr Lloyd George to lead them, may choose to destroy the Empire as they (and he) have made an end of the United Kingdom. What, then, are our masters like? What do they read, and who is it who thinks for them? There is little difference between the members of the class, wherever they be found; and though in America they have sunk lower than elsewhere, we may learn from the books which satisfy them something of the taste and character of what is called the proletariat. Here, for instance, is Dr Frank Crane, who speaks to sixteen millions of American voters every day. His readers, let us remember, are in intelligence about fourteen years of age, and when we have read a few pages of his book¹ we can well believe it. It is difficult to imagine a grown man reading these 'Human Confessions.' The very young—and the average of

¹ Human Confessions. By Frank Crane, D.D. London: John Lane.

American citizens is fourteen—might turn over Dr Crane's passages without surprise. There is not a word from end to end which could administer the slightest shock to their nerves. Dr Crane is sentimental, of course, or he would not address daily sixteen millions of citizens of these United States. He has also gauged to an inch—perhaps it was not difficult for him—the capacity of the men and women, his readers, whose mental development has been arrested. He has met Martin Tupper on his own ground, and has easily defeated him. In platitude he has not his equal among living men, and he has a precious faculty of mixing his ink with tears. "Oh reader, 'whom having not seen I love,' " he exclaims, "the purest joy I know is to feel your eyes on my page, to feel your soul stir a little against my soul." Is it not exquisite? Which one of the sixteen millions of faithful readers would not rise from the pleasant duty of committing these tender words to memory a better and a wiser man?

Dr Crane, as becomes one with a vast circulation, has a deep and simple belief in the People (with the largest P). "The elect and illuminated few," says he in his breezy way, "are humbugs. All goodness abides in the common mass of men, as all water comes from the ocean. The heart of the whole nation is truer and more to be trusted than the heart of any one saint. The world must be lovable, else the Book

would not say: 'For God so loved the world.' The world is wiser than the wisest man. Humanity speaks slowly, but there is finality and utter truth in its judgments. The world, all men and women, are happy. The only genuine happiness is that which is the common lot. . . . And do you know why The People in their entirety are so good and wise and lovely and happy? It is a secret, but I will tell. It is because The People are God's other self."

Are these not precious words? And is not Dr Crane stupendously to be pitied? You can see with half an eye that he is one among the greatest and wisest of men. How shall a man who can discover so fine a secret as that which he betrays to his sixteen millions of readers be classed as one of The People? Surely he is the saint whose heart is less true and less to be trusted than the heart of The People? Yet he does not flinch from confessing his inferiority. He does his best, like the saint of genius that he is, and then admits freely that his sixteen million readers, even though their mental development has been unkindly arrested, are infinitely wiser and better than he.

Moreover, he is perfectly content with the human race as it is. He would not improve it if he could. What are the absurd theories of Francis Galton and the others to him? "We are told by gentlemen with a scientific flourish and a professional cocksureness," says he with a pretty scorn,

"that we are never going to get fine humans until we breed for fine men as carefully as cattle are bred to get fine beeves. . . . But somewhere in the chain of reasoning which is supposed to carry the conclusions of the Shorthorn pedigree book over into human nature, somewhere there is a missing link. For, as a cold unscientific fact, the best stock of the human race is the scrub." Here again Dr Crane, with a peerless modesty, suppresses himself. Surely he, the authentic mouthpiece of wisdom, came from no common scrub. In every line of his masterpieces we can trace his illustrious descent. But even in the pride of his great talent he still remembers The People. It is not for him to consult the books of scientific observers. It is not for him to recall the plain teaching of biology. He still loves The People which reads him daily to the number of sixteen millions; and, conscious of his own grandeur, proclaims that "the thing called greatness remains the property of the Common Herd."

Yet, though in his eyes the Common Herd is supreme, he does not disdain to shepherd it. Though he bashfully admits that he is as nothing in its august presence, he still finds courage in his heart to admonish it, to instruct it, and to lead it in the paths of wisdom and knowledge. This will prove to us how gallant a man is Dr Crane. Even in the

moment of self-abasement he is not afraid to teach. And what noble lessons he beats out upon the anvil of his heart! Imagine the joy of the Common Herd, whose property greatness remains, and which knew all things before they were revealed to Dr Crane—imagine its joy, we say, when it is told that "always above our huge moiling city is still the sky." From how far a distance must Dr Crane have fetched this great and simple truth that he might present it, as a discovery, to The People, whose servant and worshipper he is, and will ever remain. With a marvellous courage he plumbs the very depth of the commonplace; he looks with piercing eyes into the inmost heart of the obvious, and there surprises its secrets. He has been able to tell his sixteen million readers that a boy's best friend is his mother, and that the late Lord Tennyson is a hard man to keep step with. Recondite and imperishable truths! Above all, he has driven the last nail into the grave of Francis Galton, a brief century after Galton's birth. "The fiction of hereditary greatness dies hard," he says in a passage of inspiration. "Leonardo da Vinci, the universal genius, was born out of wedlock." Plainly Leonardo's genius came from The People, The Common Herd. How could he inherit anything if he were born out of wedlock? He did not even inherit his mother's marriage lines.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXV. NOVEMBER 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

THE VOYAGE OF *THE MAID*.

BY G. H. GANDY.

VII.

IN the afternoon, as *The Maid* lay alongside the quay safely guarded by the Control and his armed companion, another official came down to pay the ship a visit. He was at first refused permission to come aboard by the Control, so did not appear of great importance in the bureaucratic scheme.

On making himself known to the Owner and Skipper, he turned out to be a sort of agent's clerk. There are, of course, no private shipping agents or brokers in Petrograd: all shipping business is conducted from the Custom House, a large red-brick building close to the docks, which is inhabited by innumerable male and female clerks, interpreters, and hangers-on.

Alexander, so the visitor was named, informed the Skipper

that anything he might require, such as towage, fresh water, washing, interpreting, or assistance of any kind, could be obtained on application to the Agent's Department, room number seven in the Custom House. He then proceeded to state the real business which brought him on board. He had a friend, a dealer in furs, who would be delighted to do business with the new arrivals. A deal for the whole cargo of boots might also be arranged quite easily.

"But private buying and selling is against the law here," said the Skipper. "Both parties would get into trouble, and we should not be allowed to take the furs out of the country; is that not so?"

"One must live, you know, and to do that we all speculate with or without the law," re-

plied Alexander. "The business could be arranged quite easily. My friend is a powerful man."

He spoke airily and optimistically, and as he appeared only a middleman and hardly a responsible person, the Owner, who already had an appointment at the Custom House with the Captain of the Port, did not take him too seriously, and sent the Skipper ashore with him to investigate.

The two set off, taking a bottle of rum concealed in each trouser-leg safely past the Control and the sentries on the dock-gate, and took an electric tram, decrepid looking, but free of charge, into the town, to Alexander's lodgings, in which he lived rent free. This consisted of one large room in a block of flats, barely furnished, with an iron bed in one corner and a table and plated samovar in the other. Round the walls were ranged a set of red-plush chairs, carefully covered with brown holland. Of these Alexander was inordinately proud. A dusty and neglected-looking ikon high up in a corner completed the decorations.

Here Alexander changed into his best and only complete suit of clothes, and had his dinner of black bread and beans, while the Skipper uncorked a smuggled bottle. Alexander had served in the Navy as a petty officer during the war, and had previously been a mate in the Merchant Service, hence his knowledge of English

and German, which had now given him his billet in the Custom House.

This allowed opportunities for a little private trading with the foreign ships. He showed the Skipper a few old rings and locketts, which he had to offer in exchange for any tea, soap, or chocolate which could be smuggled out past the vigilance of the sentries and the searchers at the dock-gates.

The Skipper would have none of these trinkets, but did do a deal for a pair of binoculars, giving his overcoat, old and much worn, in exchange. A move was made to the house of the Jew dealer in furs, and here Alexander, on whom the rum was beginning to take effect, endeavoured to act as interpreter, but with little success from the business point of view. An ordinary straightforward question and answer would be interpreted into half an hour's cigarettes and conversation, and the Skipper became impatient, especially as the furs shown were not particularly good, the prices exorbitant, and the dealer himself had no large stock, but would have to collect from others, in addition to getting a Government permit for any large deal.

Accordingly an adjournment was made, and Alexander offered to take the Skipper to supper with some friends of his, who, so he said, always had plenty to eat, as they had a garden, and kept chickens and a cow. This sounded

idyllic in the squalor of Petrograd, so they made their way to a Neva landing-stage, and waited for the little steamboat to take them up-river to the suburb where these friends lived. When it arrived fully laden with passengers of all sorts, from the ragged beggar and the roughly-dressed dock labourer to the comparatively stylish Government clerks, all returning home from work together, Alexander and the Skipper embarked free of charge again, and wedged themselves amongst the tightly-packed crowd.

Going up the river, Petrograd, the city of gilded domes and spires, was seen at its best. The great buildings along the banks stood out magnificently, and the Nicolai Bridge seemed crowded with traffic.

A nearer view would have revealed some of the ducal palaces and buildings as deserted wrecks or converted into tenements, and the traffic on the bridge no more than shabby home-returning workers. But kindly distance hid all squalid details.

The little steamer stopped at every stage, and gradually shed all its passengers before the two arrived at their destination. Alexander explained to the Skipper that his particular friend, who worked in the Wood Fuel Supply Office, was the son of the house they were to visit. His parents had formerly owned and run a café, and now still lived on in the same house; but the café was no

more, and they had taken up farming to supply the market in Petrograd with eggs, vegetables, and milk, and were doing very well out of it.

Private trading, though technically forbidden, could never be entirely suppressed, and two big open markets had grown up in Petrograd, where foodstuffs and many odds and ends were offered for sale.

The Government ration of a pound of bread per day, and potatoes, beans, and fats when available, was only enough for bare existence; so naturally a market grew up in spite of official edicts, and there, if one had the money, luxuries like tea and meat, honey, sugar, and milk could be obtained. If one had the money: that was the question. In addition to the ration, the worker got approximately 10,000 paper roubles a month for pocket-money to spend on cigarettes and luxuries.

When the price of a pound of tea in the market was quoted at 40,000 roubles, and sugar at 20,000 roubles, it can be seen that his pocket-money did not go far.

Hence all sorts of illicit trading grew up, and every man, however good a Bolshevik in theory, was trading, or speculating as the term is, in order to gain a few extra thousand paper roubles to keep his stomach filled.

Far from checking the activities of the private trader, the Bolshevik Government, owing to its lack of resources, has

turned every one of the population of Petrograd into a grasping business man.

At this time in Petrograd there were very few shops open. Here and there a watch-maker or barber was allowed to ply his trade, and there were a very limited number of uninviting-looking cafés, where tea and bread and cake could be obtained.

Arrived at the house, a large two-storied structure in red brick standing in less than half an acre, Alexander knocked at the massive front door, which was opened by his young friend, who bade the visitors welcome, and conducted them inside through the ground floor of what had once been a café restaurant. It was dark, and now smelt none too sweet, as it had all been turned into stables for the horse and the cow. They then mounted the stairs, and passed through the first-floor rooms, bare of furniture, and now inhabited by chickens and rabbits, eventually arriving in a purer atmosphere, at the furnished top floor, where the family were having their evening meal.

This consisted of soup, scraggy chicken, pumpkin, and potatoes, with plenty of black bread and numerous cups of weak tea : not a meal to boast

about in England, but quite remarkable in Petrograd.

Alexander, though fat and round-faced and apparently unusually well nourished for a Russian, must nevertheless have been in a state of semi-starvation previously, judging by the way he attacked the victuals before him.

After supper came cigarettes and more tea, and conversation almost unintelligible to the Skipper, as it appeared to be a political argument on the respective merits of Menshevik and Bolshevik, in which Alexander took such a leading part that no time was left for interpreting.

Later on, while it was still light, a tour of inspection was made round the live-stock apartments and round the vegetable garden, which seemed to be conducted in a very amateurish happy-go-lucky fashion, so much so that the Skipper even was moved to give the family a few hints on pruning and gardening generally. The party then went upstairs to have a little music on the cracked old piano before going to bed. Alexander and the Skipper were accommodated for the night with pillows and rugs on two comfortable sofas, as the steamboat and tram service back to the port had long ago stopped running for that day.

VIII.

While the Skipper was ashore with Alexander, the Owner had gone up to see the Captain of

the Port in his office at the Custom House.

The latter had been formerly

a Captain in the Imperial Navy, and now as Captain of the Port held an important position; but to see him riding about the dock on his tricycle clad in a seedy old overcoat and a little round Russian cap, one would never have guessed it. He only spoke French, but his secretary, a slight good-looking young fellow of one-and-twenty, formerly a count and now plain "tavarish" (comrade), wearing a pair of smart cavalry boots with no soles below the uppers, spoke English perfectly and did most of the talking.

The Captain was most polite, and expected there would be no difficulty in disposing of the cargo to some of the Co-operative Organisations, but said that he could take no part in any business owing to his position and the certain amount of suspicion with which he was regarded.

Nevertheless he introduced the Owner to a certain Mr M——, who in turn undertook to introduce the Owner to the principals. M—— worked in the Custom House, and at five o'clock took the Owner to his flat in *Offizierskaya*, one of the best districts in the town. This flat had been M——'s for many years. He lived in it rent free, but as it was large and roomy, it had been ordained that five persons should inhabit it.

M—— had got over this difficulty by taking unto himself a wife, and his establishment consisted of his wife, her mother and aunt, and an old friend of M——'s, a Mr T——,

who now worked in the Murmansk railway office.

Most of the original furniture remained, though a piece here and there had been sold as necessity arose. There was, of course, no servant, the work of the house being done by the three women.

Mrs M——, all in a flutter at having to arrange supper for an Englishman, was full of apologies for the meagre fare she had to offer—soup, coarse pancakes, and black bread—and was overjoyed when the Owner brought four tins of bully beef from his coat-pocket as his contribution to the household expenses.

After supper, tea, very weak, was taken in the Russian fashion in the drawing-room, and Mr T—— played excellently on the grand piano.

M—— went out and returned with Herr P——, a dried-up little man, a German, though twenty years in Russia, who was rapidly amassing a fortune by speculation. Herr P—— was friendly with all influential heads of administration in Petrograd, and boasted that for one illicit case of cognac and two bottles of champagne a month he had an official car permanently at his disposal. This was a great advantage, as the tram service was irregular; no private cars were in existence or permitted, and the cobbled and broken streets of Petrograd were painful for long-distance walking.

The German ships arriving at the port all brought some

cargo for Herr P——, who had his methods for landing it past the Customs, and the ships departing smuggled back valuables, jewellery, and pictures to Germany. Herr P—— had become a rich man, and was going in for more legitimate speculation. At the moment he was exporting Russian cigarettes from the Government factories, a small amount of scrap copper, bristles, and the like.

Herr P—— heard details of the Owner's cargo, and expressed the opinion that some of the numerous Co-operative Organisations, subject to the approval of the deal by the "Neo Storg" (All Russian Trade Control Board), would be glad to buy the boots, but there would be difficulty about payment in anything but paper roubles.

The Co-operative had, of course, been in existence long before the revolution, but had undergone considerable change, as the Trade Union Organisations, for whom under Government Control of Industry there was now no future use, had been merged into the Co-operatives.

Thus the worker in each employment or trade had his own special Co-operative, from which he obtained his supplies of food, clothing, &c., when available. Some Co-operatives were much richer and better supplied than others, noticeably that of the Railway Workers, for instance.

As to the foodstuffs in the cargo, Herr P—— continued,

he himself would buy them and pay in German marks, if the Owner was agreeable, while on a commission basis he would endeavour to put the boot deal through as soon as possible. If the Owner would bring samples of the boots, he would take him round the offices of various Co-operative Societies the next day.

So the following weeks were spent by the Owner in Herr P——'s company visiting various offices and partaking of interminable cigarettes and conversation in each. All were anxious to buy, especially on seeing the excellent quality of the boots, but the question of price was the difficulty. For one thing, the "Neo Storg" would not allow any Co-operative to pay more than a certain sum for imported boots, and another difficulty was that of currency.

The Owner, of course, did not wish to accept paper money, but there did not appear to be enough foreign currency circulating among the speculators of Petrograd to meet the large amount due as the purchase price of the cargo. In addition, any effort by the Co-operatives to collect a large amount of foreign money in Petrograd would have at once raised its value among the speculators, and the price would have been prohibitive.

The rates of exchange for foreign money in Petrograd bore very little relation to the rates ruling in London, for instance, the Petrograd rate

being fixed by local demand. As a matter of fact, the Russian State Bank published official rates putting an absurdly high value on the paper rouble, but these rates were ignored for all practical purposes.

At this time, in August 1921, the English £1 was worth 150,000 roubles, and the gold ten-rouble piece was worth 180,000 roubles, paper.

A pound of black bread in the market cost 3000 roubles—about fivepence in equivalent English money.

Eventually the Owner found he would have to take payment in paper roubles, and trust to luck to be able to buy up enough negotiable stuff—gold roubles and jewels, for example—to take home.

There was a certain amount of risk in this, as legally he had no right to take valuables out of the country.

If it had been permissible, the best way to dispose of the boots would have been in the market, where high prices were being paid for certain imported commodities. Tea cost 40,000 roubles (5s. 4d.) a pound, for

instance. It would have taken time to work off several thousand pairs of boots in the market though, and in addition the fatherly "Neo Storg" would not permit the foreigner to shear the populace, however anxious they were to be shorn.

When the Owner at last made up his mind to take payment in Soviet paper money, then came the haggling as to price, first with the Co-operatives and later on with the "Neo Storg" for their approval of that figure.

And here a disastrous event occurred, for the "Neo Storg" received an offer by letter from England of army boots to be delivered at Petrograd for fifteen shillings a pair, and they refused to believe that other quality boots in England could possibly cost any more.

Thereupon a deadlock ensued, and *The Maid*, undischarged, lay in the dock, while the crew employed themselves furbishing up the boots in question under the eyes of an envious crowd of Russians, who would stand and try to steal or buy until driven off by the Control.

IX.

There was one other British ship in the port with *The Maid*, s.s. *Majestic* of Hull, a large collier, which had brought 5000 tons of coal, the freight on this latter having been already settled for cash in London by the agents of the Russian Government.

The Owner and Skipper went to call on the Captain of the *Majestic*, a burly north-country man, but found him very difficult to talk to by reason of his partial deafness. They got him to understand that they would be grateful if his cook would take their flour and bake

some bread for those on board *The Maid*, as they were getting very tired of ship's biscuits, and only the blackest of bread was obtainable in the town.

Apparently the Captain gave his consent, but surprisingly enough next day, when Jack brought over the flour to the *Majestic's* cook, the Captain was present and absolutely refused to do this kindness, muttering something about "those who come to trade with Bolsheviks must be prepared to be uncomfortable." The upshot was that the Captain of the German steamer *Elsbeth* came to the rescue, and arranged to have bread baked for *The Maid* during all the time of his steamer's stay in port.

There were a good few German ships in the port at the time with soap, grain, steel rails, and general cargoes. From one of these were discharged several large crates containing Rolls-Royce, Crossley, and other well-known makes of British cars, for the use of the Bolshevik high officials.

The Skipper found out that he could obtain free medical attention for his crew at the Custom House, so sent Jack up to be overhauled, and prevailed on Old Bill to have an intermittently aching stump pulled out. The dentist made a gallant attempt on this, but was defeated, and had to excuse further efforts by pleading shortage of cocaine.

The Skipper also found out that every Saturday night there

was a concert and dance at the Custom House, to which all foreign seamen were cordially invited.

Accordingly on Saturday evening, after a careful toilet with plenty of fresh Neva water, the crew decided to patronise the show, which was held in a large upper room of the Custom House called the library, but which was only stocked with propaganda literature.

Outside the concert-room was a trestle table strewn with issues of 'The Communist,' and other books and pamphlets in German, French, and English, and presided over by a female Bolshevik, a regular blue-stock with bobbed hair and horn-rimmed spectacles.

There was no obligation to take any of this literature in order to gain admittance, so the crew went straight in, and secured excellent seats in the room, already well filled by German, Spanish, and Scandinavian seamen, as well as the few Russians who had managed to find room among so many foreigners.

Before the music began there were speeches in three languages for the benefit of the seamen present. The speech in English was delivered by a certain Captain N——, a Dane, a man of about forty-five, with a squint and a permanent crick in his neck.

Captain N—— was an interesting character, a linguist, and well educated. Discussing Bolshevism with him, the Skip-

per once remarked that England would never go in for bloody revolution.

"Oh yes, I know you go in for parliamentary methods in England," he replied; "but don't forget that your parliamentary methods once cut off the head of a king."

Captain N—— had been owner of several small ships in Denmark, but owing to the depression had fallen on bad times, and had brought himself and a diminutive pleasure steamer, *Turisten II.*, loaded with foodstuffs, up to Petrograd to offer to the Bolsheviks—at a price.

He knew no Russian when he first arrived early in the summer, but was steadily picking it up, as he intended to settle permanently in Russia, saying that all his life previously he had been working himself to a shadow chasing the nimble dollar; and now, having perceived the error of his ways, had come to Russia to live the ideal life of the Communist.

From the price he was asking for his steamer and her cargo he did not appear to have divested himself entirely of his former dollar-hunting habits. But he explained that he found it impossible to be a good Communist on an empty stomach, and his proposed little private fortune of paper roubles was only to insure himself sufficient nourishment.

The Russian and German speeches were delivered by different men, and seemed rather fiery and full of controversial

matter, but they gained some applause, more polite than hearty. Captain N——'s speech in English was short and guarded, to the effect that he was glad to welcome fellow-seamen to Russia, where he hoped they would find the Bolsheviks not quite the monsters they were represented to be.

It may here be added that a counter-revolutionary plot for a surprise landing at Oranienbaum had lately been discovered among the naval officers at Kronstadt, and the culprits were being shot wholesale every day. The Bolsheviks may not be monsters, but they are certainly ruthless in enforcing their decrees.

Some officers and men from s.s. *Majestic* and the crew of *The Maid* were the only English present, and as it was a free concert and Captain N—— looked nervous after his speech, they applauded him well enough, hoping that now they would cut the cackle and get on to the concert. This was tuneful enough, but all in Russian, and went off quite well. The electric light only failed once.

Then the room was cleared, the band played dance music, and soon the room was full of dancing couples. The foreigners found no difficulty in getting encouraging glances from prospective partners, a foreign seaman being a great asset to any young lady of Petrograd; for could he not provide her with such rare luxuries as soap, chocolate, white flour, and tea?

The Skipper sampled some of the free literature, and made the acquaintance of the spectacled blue-stockings in charge, and among other things learnt that on Sunday there would be a propaganda expedition to the Homes of Rest for Working-men.

X.

The expedition to the Homes of Rest was due to start at a certain time, but, according to the usual custom, the small steamboat provided for the purpose was not more than half an hour late. The party consisted of Spanish, Greek, Negro, German, Swedish, Norwegian, and British seamen, various interpreters and organisers, and a few employees from the Custom House who had received special permission for the trip.

Among these was a lively little lad of five, who climbed lustily about the boat, eventually finding his way down into the stokehole, from which he emerged considerably the worse for wear. His distracted mother pursued him without success till the Skipper took a hand in the game and collected the little beggar for her. But the Skipper nearly let him go again with astonishment when the child burst out in English with "Lemmego, lemmego; I won't be washed by mummy." But washed he was, and then it transpired that little George knew English far better than Russian.

His parents, misled by certain accounts of Russia after the revolution, had in 1920 come over from Shields, where

they had been living for years; and once in Russia, as they had always remained Russian subjects, found it next to impossible to return, and found conditions in Russia far different to those they had expected.

George's father was chief officer of the Russian hospital ship running to Stettin repatriating German subjects, and George volunteered that he too wanted to be a sailor, so the Skipper made friends by promising to take him as cabin-boy one day when he was old enough. His mother, who worked at the Custom House, told how George knew no Russian whatever when they first came over, and how difficult it was for him therefore when he first went to school in Petrograd, to which he was obliged to go from the very first days of their arrival. George and his mother were both neatly dressed, and they had brought some English money over with them, which they were keeping carefully for a still rainier day; but from what she told the Skipper the family were having a hard struggle, especially as new arrivals they were comparative strangers and had no influence.

Little George even bitterly realised their state, for, as his

mother was talking, he broke in with, "Don't tell him, mummy; don't tell him all about us."

After a pleasant run up-river the party disembarked and walked to the summer gardens of a former ducal palace, now devoted to the pleasures of State children and resting workmen.

As to these children, George's mother had something to say on the subject. Some of them are illegitimate, though not so many as might be supposed—marriage is popular in Petrograd; it simplifies rationing and housing and life in general—others are orphans, while the most part are children whose parents are still living, but who are unable to support them. Thus, when it was almost impossible to obtain milk or suitable and sufficient food for George, his mother had made inquiries as to his joining these State children, but on hearing the conditions laid down found that she could not possibly comply. Certainly they had the best of food and treatment, but for this material advantage the parents had to relinquish all claims on their children, and could not even see them till their education was completed. This education was thorough and completely Communist.

The Bolsheviks realise full well that the vast majority of the older generation can never master their revolutionary and topsy-turvy principles. Their hopes lie in the children, who

in a few years will grow up into devout little Communists every one of them.

At the present moment there are few thorough-paced Bolsheviks amongst the average workaday men and women in Petrograd; nevertheless there is no idea of counter-revolution against the iron hand which grasps the reins of power. A man may growl against the Government, but when it comes down to a question of hard tacks, he may not wish or dare to risk a change.

With only lukewarm support the hopes of the Bolsheviks for an ultra-Communist State have had to be deferred, their present aim being to preserve their power and existence till the new generation of Communist-educated youth grows to maturity and the older troublesome conservative element, which it has been impossible to massacre out of existence, has had time to die off naturally.

A band of very young State children chaperoned by a good-looking young nurse were playing in the gardens, and stopped to stare round-eyed at the party of thirty or forty foreigners passing *en route* for the Rest House. This was a magnificent building, in good repair both outside and inside, nearly all the original furniture remaining in the downstairs rooms. The bedrooms had been turned into dormitories, and the elaborate bathrooms were not working, but there was enough similitude to a palace to dazzle the eye of any resting working-man.

All the same, these latter did not look particularly comfortable sitting in gilded chairs on polished parquet flooring. There was not a real easy-chair in the place, and smoking was only allowed in the bedrooms or outside.

The Rest House, in addition to being a sort of almshouse for ancient workers, is also a holiday house for the hale and hearty, the theory being that after six months' steady work at his appointed job every man or woman is entitled to one week's holiday at the Rest House. Quite an attractive theory, but in practice only a lucky few manage to obtain any actual holiday there.

Most of the palace gardens had been used to grow very necessary potatoes and cabbages, but the hothouse for rare palms and plants had been preserved, and was shown to the visitors with much pride.

Both the Skipper and Jack thought of Kew and smiled.

Time was getting on, and after having had a group photograph taken of the party, the organisers led the way into the great panelled, gilded, and pictured dining-hall, where black bread, corned-beef sandwiches, and tea were provided, which, considering the food shortage, was a lavish meal.

After tea came the usual speeches in Russian, German, and English. One of the organisers, a sailor, gave the English speech in a strong American accent. It was a good little

speech of welcome to the foreign curiosity-monger, and was much shorter and contained far less fiery revolution than the others, of which it was supposed to be a translation. Later on the Skipper asked the speaker why he had not translated the original speeches more literally, and was told that the original speaker was too excitable to appeal to Englishmen, so the translator had done some toning down for their benefit.

The evening terminated with the party attending one of the free concerts for the populace, where they occupied all the front rows, while not a murmur came from the natives relegated to the back and standing packed round the walls.

On another Sunday evening Jack and the Skipper, accompanied by Alexander—the latter in high feather, having acquired a pair of boots in exchange for a gold watch with damaged works—walked up into the city to visit Fun City, two bridges above the Nicolai on the north side of the river. Here, after paying 5000 roubles each, they were admitted through the turnstile, and were immediately greeted by the piercing cries of female passengers taking their pleasure on a switchback railway.

The side-shows consisted of swing-boats, the switchback, and half a dozen open-air theatres, where anything from serious melodrama to eccentric juggling could be seen, admission to each of which could be

obtained for a few thousand roubles.

Jack and the Skipper scattered their money lavishly, and sampled nearly everything, and when reckoning up later were

pleasantly surprised to discover that although uncounted thousands had been squandered, the evening had actually cost little more than half a crown apiece.

XI.

After three weeks Herr P—— had his arrangements complete for taking his share of *The Maid's* cargo, and a tug came to take her up the river to lie in the centre of the town alongside the Vassili Ostror, a street on the water-front just below the Nicolai Bridge. The market was only a few steps off, where the Skipper used to buy eggs and fresh vegetables. At the rate of exchange the prices for meat and farm produce worked out to much the same as English prices.

To a Russian, of course, these prices seemed fabulous, but evidently some had the money to buy, for business was never slack, and the market was always packed. Most of the stalls lay inside a big covered building, while outside the match, cigarette, and cake sellers hawked their wares. Here and there in the roadway some enterprising individual dumped down a collection of rubbish, and waited for custom.

One of these dumps of broken clocks, chinaware, old books, and faded bric-a-brac was presided over by three indescribably ragged little girls. The Skipper, returning laden with supplies, stopped and exclaimed

to himself as the motley collection caught his eye, and was surprised to be taken up in English by the eldest child.

"Rubbish, is it? It's all we have here now," said she.

He inquired how she came to learn English, and was told that she and her sisters—and she indicated the other two little ragamuffins—had once upon a time had an English governess.

She would say no more, and was apparently already fearful of having said too much, so the Skipper gave her 5000 roubles for a faded pen-wiper, and went his way, wondering how these half-clad children would fare in the coming winter, to which all inhabitants of Petrograd were looking forward with fearful anticipation.

Herr P—— paid for his consignment in German marks, which at the then rate of exchange showed the Owner a handsome profit; but as a matter of fact, before they could be changed later on into English money at Reval the bottom had begun to fall out of the German exchange.

Accordingly one day at last two motor lorries assembled opposite the ship, accompanied

by a complaisant customs official with the necessary authorisation papers, and all Herr P——'s cargo was discharged into the waiting vehicles.

But, alas! the boots remained unsold. The Co-operatives, under instructions from the "Neo Storg," had offered an extremely low price to be paid in paper roubles only. This meant that the Owner would have to remain many weeks longer in Petrograd while he bought negotiable goods, in exchange for his paper roubles, which were valueless outside Russia. In addition, all valuables that he might buy would have to be smuggled out of the country securely hidden in *The Maid's* anatomy. This latter was quite possible to manage, but the Owner had had one unpleasant experience in that line.

Introduced by Herr P——, he had visited the house of a big speculator, and been shown some beautiful jewellery for sale.

Fortunately he bought nothing, for suddenly there came a peremptory knock on the outer door, and before anything could be done there entered a police official, backed up by a squad of soldiers, who proceeded to arrest every one on the premises.

The Owner was searched and found to be innocent of valuables, and he exhibited his passport; but not being able to speak Russian, was marched off with the rest of the party to the prison in Govohoveya

No. 2, where he was incarcerated in a cell by himself for an hour, till a higher official with an interpreter came and released him with a "caution."

So all things considered, and the money offered was too little to show any profit even after effecting its exchange into jewellery, the Owner decided to refuse to sell, and gave out that he would leave for England with his cargo without further waste of time.

It was hoped that this might bring the Russians up to the scratch, and sailing was delayed accordingly, but the offer was not increased, so the Skipper went off to the Custom House to clear the ship and arrange for a tug to Kronstadt. No difficulties were made about this, only a little bill for fifteen pounds was presented for payment in English money on account of harbour, dock dues, and towage while at Petrograd. This seemed strange, as it had been understood that everything in Russia was free; but it was pointed out that ships only came free to Petrograd when they brought supplies for the Government. As this had not been the case, and no charge had been made for the eighty miles' tow from the Priemny to Kronstadt, the bill was fairly reasonable.

The Skipper offered to pay in Soviet paper roubles, the money of the country, but this was politely refused, and foreign money insisted upon before the ship could be cleared

by the Customs and allowed to sail.

After settling the bill the ship towed out to Kronstadt, where she lay a day at anchor while repairs were being finished on the seized bearing of the engine. Fortunately there was no need to use it, as a German tug was returning after having left two big lighters loaded with steel rails at Petrograd, and for a consideration the Captain agreed to tow *The Maid* down to the Priemny. A free tow could no doubt have been arranged more cheaply with the Harbour-master, but it would have meant delay till a tug-boat was available.

The Captain of the German tug had another client for a tow in the shape of a rakish-looking Finnish motor-launch.

The Owner and the Skipper boarded this boat, and made the acquaintance of its owner and crew, who had fallen on evil times indeed. The boat was brand-new, with a 60-h.p. engine, and had been built for smuggling spirit across from Reval to Finland. Her owner with three friends had taken her out for her trial spin, when bad weather overtook them, and the motor broke down after nearly all their fuel oil had been exhausted.

They drifted close to the Priemny Light Vessel, which they signalled for assistance, and were told to anchor, to wait for a tow from the next steamer going up to Petrograd. The swept channel in

places passes within thirty miles of the Finnish coast, and it was arranged that their tow should be cast off then, as they had just enough motor-spirit to take them that distance under their own power. But intentionally or not, the Russian pilot in charge of the vessel which towed them up never slipped the tow, and they were taken right up to Petrograd, where, relations between Russia and Finland being strained as usual, they were arrested and thrown into prison for three weeks on suspicion as spies.

Now having proved harmless, they had been released and told to return to Finland. They were only too willing, but had not enough gasolene in their boat to do so, and were negotiating for a tow from the captain of the German tug, who, knowing their plight, was driving a hard bargain.

The Finns were famishing after their three weeks' semi-starvation in prison, and were glad to receive supplies of food and tobacco from *The Maid*. S——, the owner of the motor-launch, came to see over *The Maid*, which he thought an ideal ship for running a cargo of spirit from Riga or Danzig to a secret rendezvous with his boat off the coast of Finland. He insisted on leaving his telephone number for the Owner to ring him up in Helsingfors when *The Maid* arrived at Reval.

A heavy westerly gale set in, which delayed towing down

for three days ; but at last, on the morning of 27th September, *The Maid* left Kronstadt, and by 8 P.M. was making sail off the Priemny Light Vessel close-hauled, and shaping an easterly course for Reval, distant only one hundred and ten miles,—a day's, or at most two days', run, so the Owner expected. But this was the season for strong westerly gales in the Gulf of Finland, and his hopes were to remain unfulfilled, for *The Maid* was to have ten days hard battling against unfavour-

able weather before the short run was to be accomplished.

The last of the Priemny's flashing red-and-white light was seen at midnight as *The Maid* worked slowly eastward, and the Skipper fully expected it to be his last sight of Bolshevik Russia for a long time to come. But he also was to be disappointed, for he and *The Maid*, with her cargo of footwear, were destined to see Red Russia once more, and to feel the cold grip of the Russian winter into the bargain.

(To be continued.)

“GOOD GOD, CAROLINE.”

(TO J. L. B., 1922.)

I.

WHEN General Bellows first perceived Mr Chealey, in the early autumn of 1919, Mr Chealey was using his handkerchief, or, as he himself would have termed it, his pocket-hangkercheef, as a duster—and not without need.

General Bellows had reached the clump of trees called Paddockclose, which ends the long level succession of fields known as the King's Mile, that lies along the edge of the King's Lodge deer-park, and still tells in its name the story of the days when King Charles coursed deer with wild Cramp Ditton in the Cotswolds long ago. Paddockclose was then the paddock whence the chase started, and the King's Mile was a mile of unbroken sward that finished in front of the King's Lodge, from the balconies and balconied roof of which king and courtiers watched the deer pulled down.

The park boundary here turning left through the Paddockclose trees, General Bellows prepared to turn left also, but before doing so he leaned over the gate in the park hedge to take a cursory glance up and down the narrow road that ran on the other side of it, and make sure there was nothing there that needed deal-

ing with; and in the road, a short distance away under the trees, he suddenly perceived Mr Chealey dusting himself.

Once off the chief roads of the Cotswolds, and a stranger is an event—and Mr Chealey was not only a stranger but one who, as the General instantly perceived, was evidently feeling his position as such in some depression of spirits. The white lime-dust of the blazing Cotswold uplands lay thick on his highly unsuitable shabby black coat and striped grey trousers and little bowler hat, and hung on his eyelashes in surrounding white clouds that made his pale tired eyes look paler still. He was flicking at himself with a kind of helpless and unhappy vigour, while his uncertain glance wandered down the road that went on in burning light beyond the single oasis of shadows in which he stood.

“Good day to you,” said General Bellows in a loud voice, and Mr Chealey sprang in the air.

“It's a hot day,” said General Bellows as loudly as before, and Mr Chealey sprang once more, and turned round in his spring to face the gate and the owner of the voice.

"Sorry if I startled you," said General Bellows.

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," said Mr Chealey with a gasp.

The thoughts of General Bellows usually travelled straight to his lips without any secondary consideration or modifying perception checking their progress *en route*. They were generally excellent thoughts, and as he seldom had more than one of them in his mind at a time, he was usually able to concentrate upon it very firmly and get it very clearly stated; and it was believed that this power of tremendous concentration on one point, and of total oblivion to all others, had very materially assisted in the success of the General's military career. He now surveyed Mr Chealey disapprovingly.

"Your nerves seem to be in a very bad state, sir," he remarked. "A man shouldn't jump like that merely because some one speaks to him on the road. You're hot, of course, and perhaps you're tired. That may be it. Come a long way?"

The thoughts of Mr Chealey, in contradistinction to those of General Bellows, seldom travelled straight to anything. They generally met other thoughts on their way—chiefly unformed ones—and emerged, as it were, in a fighting crowd.

"Not at all—that is to say—thank you, I don't mind—you're very kind," he stammered.

"I don't know where you're going to," proceeded General Bellows, "but as you seem a stranger to these parts, perhaps you don't know that this lane only runs into a secondary Oldwait and Southreach road, and that there are more direct routes than this to both places. As a matter of fact, it's a lane that really only exists to serve my house and a farm or two. However, if you're going on, you'll find my place about three-quarters of a mile farther along on your right. Iron gates and two appalling lodges. Go straight in and ask for a rest and a drink. That will help you on your way a bit. These are not the kind of clothes to go about the Cotswolds in. Say I sent you if I'm not back—General Bellows. But I shall be there almost as soon as you will. I'm going round by the park. Good day to you."

He turned and tramped off, and left Mr Chealey standing helplessly in the shadows, gazing after him in bewildered agitation. When the General had quite disappeared, Mr Chealey drew a long breath, and wiped his dusty brow with the dustier bandanna.

"Well, if that's the owner of King's Lodge, I doubt if it's much use me going on," he said dejectedly. "You could hardly *meet* a gentleman you'd less like to put a question to!"

He looked back along the road by which he had come. The point where it ran across the main Oxford and Chelten-

ham road was still in sight. To go back all those weary miles to Lorton without even having tried to do what he had come to try to do—"No," said Mr Chealey, sighing. "It's got to be done somehow. It's the last time, anyway. I suppose I ought to take it as a bit of luck that I've met him and been asked in. But I wish I hadn't." He issued from the Paddock close shadows into the blazing sunlight once more, and continued on his way.

Thus it happened that when Mrs Bellows, walking out for an early afternoon stroll, came mildly forth between the iron gates and the two appalling lodges and turned left, the first thing she perceived was Mr Chealey dusting himself busily a little way along the road between the high hedges, in preparation for what he thought must surely be by now his imminent arrival at King's Lodge.

Mrs Bellows, not being General Bellows, was able to perceive and pass a stranger without experiencing any very imperative desire to oblige him to become an acquaintance, and she would have floated on with no more than a passing glance, and perhaps a passing reflection on the extreme unsuitability of the stranger's attire to his surroundings, had not Mr Chealey, on seeing her, ceased his anxious dusting, coughed, hesitated, raised his little bowler hat, and stepped forward.

"I beg your pardon, mad-

am," he said, "but can you tell me if I have to go much farther before I come to a house called King's Lodge?"

"You don't have to go any farther," said Mrs Bellows, pausing graciously. "It's only the hedge that prevents your seeing it now. If you go on ten steps more you'll come to the lodges. They stand a little back from the road, or you could see them too."

"Thank you, thank you, madam, I'm sure," said Mr Chealey, bowing.

"Do you want to see anybody there?" said Mrs Bellows.

"No—that is—not exactly—perhaps—that is——" said Mr Chealey. "What I mean is, I think I met the gentleman who lives there down the road, madam—and he was so kind—that is, he suggested—he thought it a hot day—a rest, a very brief rest, of course——"

"Do, by all means. That will have been my husband," said Mrs Bellows.

She surveyed Mr Chealey with leisurely graciousness. She was unlike General Bellows in that she frequently had more than one thought at a time, and unlike Mr Chealey in that she was able to decide which one of them to express. "I wonder what the queer little business can be that brings this queer little man to this part of the world," she thought. "I wonder if he's front door or back! If he goes alone, Priggles is certain to send such a meek little tired dusty

sorrowful thing to the back, and he'll be put in the servants' hall and treated with condescension. I don't think I'll let him be sent to the back." The idle thoughts drifted all together through Mrs Bellows' head, and aloud she said serenely, "Let me show you the way," and she turned and floated along beside Mr Chealey.

However unsuitable Mr Chealey's attire may have been, Mrs Bellows' own attire, though it went most beautifully with the beauty of the country she was in and with the beauty of the weather she was enjoying, and was most delightfully suitable to both, was in other respects quite as unsuitable as Mr Chealey's. It did not in the least, for instance, go with that admirable, that unbending, that almost religious conviction on the part of the true English that there is but one kind of clothing which can possibly be considered suitable to real ladies in the country, and that no real lady would ever appear there except in tweeds, little round hats, and thick nailed shoes with Indian fringes to them. Mrs Bellows' explanation was believed to be that, not having had to marry into the class in which she lived, there was no need for her to be careful to show that she knew how to dress suitably to it, in the country or elsewhere. Anyway, she seldom did so, and on this occasion Mr Chealey's vivid and humble perception of the superior advantages possessed

by nearly everybody except himself was greatly exercised by the exquisite and flower-like effect of Mrs Bellows. He walked gingerly along the edge of the bordering grass, as one who wished to show how far he was from claiming a share with her of even so liberal a thing as a road, and accompanied their progress with earnest protests against the trouble he was giving; and thus they did the ten more steps together and came to the high wrought-iron gates and their tall stone-balled pillars, and the two appalling little lodges, much smaller than the gates, that were not only like salt-cellars but like squashed salt-cellars.

So involved in his protests and apologies was Mr Chealey that he had no leisure at first to look at anything, and they had passed the gates and the lodges and were well in the drive before he happened to glance ahead. "I do hope I am not bringing you back, madam—that is, I fear I am indeed bringing you back—what I mean is——" said Mr Chealey. Here he looked anxiously along the drive, and his face changed and he stopped dead. "My goodness," he ejaculated, quite abruptly and naturally, "*it is!*"

"Is what?" said Mrs Bellows.

"Inigo Jones," breathed Mr Chealey, as one who sees a vision.

"Well, they *say* not, you know," said Mrs Bellows. "I

believe they think it was built by a pupil of his."

"He must have been a very good pupil!" said Mr Chealey, drawing a long breath.

Mrs Bellows looked at her country home with her leisurely gracious gaze. Grey and square, built of the Cotswold stone—its pillars and its balconied roof, its mullions and carvings, its walls and balustrades weathered by the passing of hundreds of years—King's Lodge stood at the distant end of a long open grassed space through which a straight formal drive ran to the pillared arcade before its front door, and was set at the back of a single great half-moon of splendid beeches—high towers, on this magnificent autumn afternoon, of flaming rose and gold. They grew thick-ranked, far higher than the roof, shoulder to shoulder, and each tree a glory; and the long wings of the half-moon ran out on either side of the little grey carved house, and enclosed it as in a deep three-sided court of gorgeous colour.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" said Mr Chealey, sighing. "How very pretty!"

"It is rather unusual, isn't it?" said Mrs Bellows. "So odd to come upon a building like a tiny bit of a little Versailles looking out on an English country lane; isn't it! Had you heard of it before?"

"Yes—that is—I have read—that is——" said Mr Chealey, recovering from the single-mindedness of his momentary

absorption and immediately recommencing to stammer.

"Are you interested in architecture?" said Mrs Bellows.

"I — that is — it is — I have——" said Mr Chealey.

"Parts of it are not at all good *inside*," Mrs Bellows informed him graciously. "Some of it was restored, you see, by the same generation of my husband's family that built the lodges, and even Herbert hates those. Still, of course, the best way to restore is to destroy as much as possible, and it's quite comfortable and decidedly uncommon. You can get to the second bathroom quite easily if you go completely round the house out-doors and in again by a side door; and Priggles assures us that all the best butlers are five foot three. We can't have them higher than that, you see, because the door from the back premises to the hall is five foot two. Shall we go on?"

They went on, Mr Chealey walking as one on tiptoe. They passed the lichened grey walls that stood on either side under the beeches and framed the gardens in front of the house, and Mr Chealey caught glimpses through their wrought-iron gates of the deer in the deer-park beyond. He heard the cool splashing of the fountain in the round lawn before the pillared portico. He sighed, he stammered, he plunged into abstraction, and emerged with a start. His anxious eyes and tired little face were full of nervous pre-occupation.

Mrs Bellows, who lived in these high and beech-grown solitudes, seven miles from anywhere, in the same reflective fashion in which she had always lived anywhere the General decided to put her, from a Bagdad cellar in Mesopotamia to his recently sold town house in Mayfair, and who looked at everybody she met in the world in the same detached and faintly amused fashion, glanced at Mr Chealey from time to time, but seldom interrupted, except by a gracious and encouraging smile, the spasmodic torrent of apologies, thanks, and protests with which he endeavoured to express his sense of her kindness. However much he talked, Mr Chealey never seemed to get anything quite said. Whatever he wanted to say always appeared to fall over something else he wanted to say and couldn't—something that lay permanently on the threshold of his mind, as it were, and tripped up everything that tried to get by. The faultless kindness of Mrs Bellows, however, remained unmoved by the constantly defeated efforts of Mr Chealey to thank her for it. She was kind as a Royalty is kind, kind as a lady is kind who has been the serene and disinterested dispenser of a public man's determined and somewhat indiscriminate hospitality in high places and low. Whether it were one chance stranger in a blue moon, as up here in the Cotswolds, or five hundred strangers in an hour, as at an

official reception in Cairo, to the musing and faultless treatment by the detached Mrs Bellows of her fellow-creatures it appeared to make very little difference.

She took Mr Chealey into the house and up the broad oak stairs and out to the great square balcony over the portico, which was as large as a room. From the outside walls of the house old carved stone faces looked down at Mr Chealey as they had once looked down on King Charles and his nobles; and over the broad top of the carved balustrade upon which the royal elbows must often have rested, Mr Chealey looked forth at the rolling Cotswolds, disappearing to wonderful purple distances among the separated rounded assemblages of trees which here characterise the landscape. It was as lovely to look out at the open country from the heart of that red and gold court of beeches as it had been to look into it from the open country. Mr Chealey's agitation appeared to increase in an exact ratio to his perception of the beauty of the house and its situation. He gazed at the view in miserable silence.

Mrs Bellows gave him a cushioned deck-chair to sit in, and inquired his name, and told him the names of the far-away hills, and asked him whether he would like something to drink, and had just moved back into the sitting-room that gave on to the balcony to ring the bell, when

there came on the stairs the sound of an echoing and ascending tramp.

"Caroline! Where are you, Caroline!" said the loud voice of General Bellows. "Oh, here you are. Look here, Caroline, I met an extraordinary little blighter down the road just now, a suburban little blighter. Can't think what he's doing in these parts. He was so tired he jumped half out of his skin when I merely bade him good day, so I told him to come here and get a rest. He may turn up at any moment, and you'd better tell Priggles to—oh, he *has* turned up—oh, here he is. Here you are. Don't get up, don't get up. Have a drink. What'll you have?"

"Mr Chealey was just saying he thinks he would like a drink of milk," said Mrs Bellows, as Mr Chealey achieved his exit from the low deck-chair after a desperate struggle complicated by bows.

"*Milk!*" said General Bellows. "A drink of milk! Good God, Caroline, what use is *milk* to a tired man with a thirst on him! Have a whisky-and-soda! Have a brandy and Vichy. Have a claret and Seltzer. Have anything but milk!"

"I think—that is—I mean—I fear—alcohol," said Mr Chealey, bowing and smiling nervously.

Mrs Bellows went through the glass balcony door into the sitting-room again, and returned with a large chunk of

cake in her hand. "We always keep some handy for the birds," she said in a gracious smiling aside to Mr Chealey as she passed him, and she went to the balustrade and, leaning on it, began abstractedly to break up the cake and scatter it over the sweep below. Mr Chealey, with a suddenly arrested and concentrated gaze, followed the movements of her hands.

"No, no, no! A whisky-and-soda, *that's* the thing!" said the General, striding into the sitting-room and ringing the bell. "And I'll split one with you myself, what's more. It's a very hot day."

But when the whisky-and-soda came, borne by Mr Priggles the butler, who could never be higher than five foot three, Mr Chealey, still smiling nervously, took one sip and set it down and said how beautiful the view was, while General Bellows obscured his entire countenance in his large tumbler, and Mrs Bellows musingly watched the birds that darted to and from the beeches.

"I think—that is—I fear—so much kindness to a stranger—a delightful rest——" said Mr Chealey.

"Why, man, you've drunk nothing," said the General as he set down his empty tumbler.

"Most kind—that is—alcohol—I fear," said Mr Chealey; and though he went on bowing and smiling more nervously than ever, and seemed overwhelmed with the kind hospitality that had been shown him, the whisky-and-soda was

somehow still untouched when he finally managed to say that he thought he must be going.

"Well, we'll come down with you to the door. We generally go for a walk in the park before tea, and it's time we were starting," said General Bellows, and they all descended the shining oak stairs together.

Mrs Bellows had shaken hands with him graciously, and General Bellows had shaken hands with him abruptly, and Mr Chealey had left the front door and was out on the sweep, when he suddenly turned round and came back. With a pale face and anxious eyes gazing fixedly at General Bellows, he approached that surprised gentleman.

"General Bellows, sir," he said, "I suppose you wouldn't think of *letting* your house, sir, or *selling* it."

"Wouldn't think of *what*, sir!" said the astonished General Bellows.

"Of letting your house, sir, or selling it," said Mr Chealey faintly.

Had Mr Chealey asked the question casually and lightly in the course of conversation, it is probable that the answer would have been as casual, since in itself the subject is not one to cause great emotion or excitement. But the despairing anxiety, the urgent appeal, the suddenness and the desperate earnestness of Mr Chealey's return, turned it almost into an assault. A new and unexpected thought thrust itself

suddenly upon the thought that was comfortably in possession of the General's mind, and this was a sensation to which not even perpetual practice could ever quite accustom him.

"Of course I don't want to let or sell my house!" he said loudly. "What an extraordinary thing to ask! Do you mean you want to buy it?"

"Oh no, sir," said Mr Chealey, endeavouring to smile. His lips were beginning to tremble, but he still spoke without stammering. Whatever had lain on the threshold between his mind and his speech had suddenly arisen and emerged, and he spoke in the single-mindedness of one unconfused and absorbing idea. "I don't want to buy it myself," he said. "I'm afraid I'm hardly in a position to do that! But if you were thinking of selling it, sir, if you only *would*, sir, we could get you a very high price nowadays, extraordinarily high, probably more than treble what it was worth before the war; or if you wished to let we could secure you a very high rental—we could indeed, sir, almost any rental you wished to name. Moderate-sized houses of this type——" He got no further in his faint and hurried speech.

"So you're a house-agent, are you!" said General Bellows, folding his arms and surveying Mr Chealey from the porch of his home. "One of those confounded fellows whose letters I chuck by the score into the waste-paper basket

every day. A man can't have a house worth looking at nowadays without being pestered to death by half a hundred agents who want to make money out of it. I suppose you came down here on purpose to get hold of me, eh? You did, eh? I thought so! I think it would have been better taste on your part if you had told me at once that you knew the place quite well, and were on your way to try and make me sell it. Well, sir, I'm afraid you've made your journey in vain. I haven't the faintest intention of either letting or selling my house. Good day to you."

For a moment longer Mr Chealey, with a white face, stared at the irritated countenance of the owner of King's Lodge. Then without a word he turned and hastened away.

So sudden, so speechless, so despairing was Mr Chealey's flight that it startled General Bellows almost as much as Mr Chealey's equally sudden return had done. He unfolded his arms and gazed after him in amazement.

"The little blighter's mad!" he said with profound conviction.

"He's hungry," said Mrs Bellows in her mild and indolent voice.

"*Hungry!*" repeated the General, removing his surprised gaze from Mr Chealey's fleeing little figure to contemplate in still greater surprise the faultlessly kind and faintly amused expression with which Mrs Bellows was following the pre-

cipitate departure of their recent guest. "Why on earth should he be *hungry!*"

"How should I know, Herbert dear," said Mrs Bellows serenely. "But what he wanted more dreadfully than anything in the world was the cake I gave the birds."

"The cake you gave the birds!" exclaimed the General at the top of his voice.

"The reason he wouldn't drink the whisky-and-soda," said Mrs Bellows, "was because he was afraid it would go to his head. And so it would have, of course, with nothing inside him."

"Nothing inside him!" exclaimed the General. "Now, how in the name of Heaven can you pretend to know, Caroline, that that little bounder had nothing inside him!"

"Oh, well, I suppose he had *something*," conceded Mrs Bellows, with gracious indifference. "Words, for instance. Heaps of words. Things he couldn't get said. I suppose he found it extra terrifying to get them said when it was his last chance—like striking a match when there isn't another. He couldn't bring himself to say them till he had actually turned his back to go away, and he'd been trying to the whole afternoon. Well, his match went out, poor little oddment, directly he got it struck, and, anyway, he's gone now," said Mrs Bellows, as the far-away little Chealey shot through the distant gates and vanished. "And it's getting

late. Shall we go for our walk, Herbert ? "

"Good God, Caroline ! " said the General in a loud and exasperated voice. "His last chance of *what !* "

"Dear Herbert, how should I know ! " said Mrs Bellows mildly. "If we don't start at once we shall be late back to tea."

General Bellows paid no heed. He stared down the empty drive. He was busy seizing a new thought. The moment he got hold of it, it got hold of him. "I'm going to see what's wrong with that miserable little beggar," he announced, and he strode across the sweep, and took a short cut over the grass for a gap in the hedge at the bottom of the grounds well to the left of the gates, travelling much faster on his journey to intercept Mr Chealey than Mr Chealey, with his shorter legs, had travelled on his journey to escape.

The gap was filled in by a low stone wall, and the General, on reaching it, looked cautiously over. He immediately perceived Mr Chealey, a little to his right, standing facing him in the road, between him and the gates. But Mr Chealey did not see the General. Trembling from head to foot, absorbed in the effort to retain his tottering self-control, he was dusting himself with all his might, and his bandanna handkerchief shook in his hand as he worked it busily round and round the rim of his little

hat. Just as the General's intent countenance topped the wall, Mr Chealey addressed himself aloud, assiduously polishing the while. "Come, come, Chealey, this is *no* way to behave ! " he said. "Dear me, Chealey, whatever is the matter ? Come now, Chealey, *this* won't do ! " adjured Mr Chealey in accents of quivering remonstrance. The heavy tears were streaming down his tired face, and falling with a plop into the Cotswold dust.

Mrs Bellows was sitting in graceful comfort against a pillar on the edge of the raised flag pavement of the portico when General Bellows and Mr Chealey returned with great rapidity up the drive together. Such was the intensity of the thought that now possessed the General's mind, that the little feet of the bewildered and twittering Mr Chealey were barely allowed to touch the earth as he sped back to King's Lodge in the firm and enveloping grasp of its owner.

"The man's exhausted," said General Bellows. His tones were brief and commanding, as those of one who deals with an emergency, but has been far too well accustomed to emergencies all over the world not to know exactly what to do and to insist on its being done in a calm and quiet manner. "He's ill with hunger. Waste no words, Caroline. Let there be no fuss and nonsense. We can make all inquiries later. One small cup of tea at seven in Cheltenham this

morning and nothing since. What is there in the house? Have everything there is brought in at once. Now no questions, if you please, Caroline, till the man is fed, and no noise and nonsense," said the General, sweeping Mr Chealey into the old hall that lay wide and panelled and cool beyond the glare of the sun.

"I didn't—that is—I assure you—it's only——" stammered Mr Chealey; but the General was already roaring at the little door in the hall that led to the back premises.

"Do sit down, Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows' gracious accents through the noise, as she sank into an arm-chair. "We often have tea early, and we often have it here in the hall because of this nice big table. It will be charming if you will join us."

"Priggles," roared the General at the back premises door. "Where on earth are you, Priggles? Come here this instant. Look here, Priggles, bring some food at once. Bring eggs, chops, sausages, bacon, anything. Bring whatever there is in the house. What is there in the house? Can't *you* suggest anything, Caroline?"

"Perhaps Priggles can," said Mrs Bellows, her charming head resting placidly against the cushions of her chair. "This gentleman has had a long walk, Priggles, and has another long one before him, so we shall want a rather larger tea than usual."

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles.

"I do assure you——" faltered Mr Chealey.

"A rather larger tea!" said the General. "Good God, Caroline, we want an *immense* tea! We want a *dinner*! What can we have, Priggles! Make haste, man!"

"If I might make a suggestion, sir," said the lofty and unmoved Mr Priggles, "a couple of poached eggs, sir, as though hunting, so to speak."

"A very good idea, Priggles," said Mrs Bellows.

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles.

"Not nearly enough, not nearly enough," said the General strongly.

"I do assure you——" faltered Mr Chealey.

"And perhaps the cold chicken-pie, sir, that was merely cast an eye on as a sideboard piece at lunch," continued Mr Priggles.

"A very good idea, Priggles," said Mrs Bellows benignly.

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles.

"Then bring it, man," said the General. "Bring it at once, if that's all there is. And the eggs, and anything else you can think of. I'm afraid you'll have to make that do, Chealey. It's incomprehensible that there shouldn't be more in the house, but I'm afraid you'll have to make that do."

"I assure you, sir—I do assure you——" faltered Mr Chealey; and Mr Priggles with-

drew, five foot three, and so imposing in his majesty that he was far more alarming to those outside the household than any one else inside it, including its master.

When the meal arrived Mr Chealey drew his chair to the table in a hesitating confusion of deprecations and assurances. But at his first mouthful of poached egg his protesting murmurs suddenly died away. He did not forget his manners. It was impossible to imagine a Mr Chealey forgetting those, even on his death-bed. But to toy with his tea as if he did not really need it, but was merely disposing of a mouthful or two as a pleasing accompaniment to the enjoyment of polite conversation—which is, of course, the only way to eat anything in high society—was more than Mr Chealey could achieve. His face changed. He became silent. With a fixed countenance he began his meal.

As for General Bellows, he sat absorbed in Mr Chealey. He piled food upon his plate, he kept his tea-cup brimming, he cut large slices of bread for him which he coated earnestly with butter. When not thus occupied he sat back and regarded Mr Chealey strongly; while Mrs Bellows continued to enjoy her tea in her graceful and leisurely way, and to talk in her usual gracious and conversational manner. So sustained, indeed, were both her tea and her benign conversation that it really would have

been quite easy for nobody to notice that Mr Chealey was making rather an unusually large and lengthy meal, or that General Bellows was so intent upon his doing so that he was making no conversation of any kind, either gracious or otherwise. Mr Chealey might really almost have succeeded in thinking that he was not noticing these things himself.

But—whether it was the food or the kindness or the relief, or his host's keen contemplation of him, or just a sudden realisation of his own fatigue and hopelessness—but suddenly Mr Chealey laid down his knife and fork and gazed in a strained manner at the table. Then he hurriedly took up his knife and fork again, ate a mouthful of chicken-pie, choked, put down his knife and fork once more, and desperately endeavoured to get out his bandanna handkerchief in time. Too late! To the General's inexpressible horror two large tears rolled down Mr Chealey's cheeks, and dropped upon the chicken-pie.

"Good God, Caroline!" said the General hurriedly. "Now, for Heaven's sake, Chealey! Come, cheer up, man! There's nothing to cry for *now*. Have some more eggs. Have some more tea. Have some more pie. Good God, Caroline, can't you do something!"

"I'm ashamed—I don't—it isn't——" sobbed Mr Chealey. "It's the first time—kindness—I haven't had much to eat for some time now—I'm so dreadfully on the rocks." He

put his elbows on the table and his face in his hands, and sobbed unreservedly.

"Good God, Caroline, hadn't I better go away?" said the General, helpless before this revelation of misery and exhaustion.

"Well, you *could*, of course, Herbert," said Mrs Bellows judiciously. "Do if you like. But I don't see why you should go away because Mr Chealey wishes to cry. Do cry, Mr Chealey. There isn't the faintest reason why you shouldn't."

"Good God, Caroline!" said the General.

"Well, I don't see why he shouldn't," said Mrs Bellows. "It's a very suitable thing for him to do. So nice for all of us not to have to pretend any longer that there isn't a good deal for him to cry about. And what I suggest," said Mrs Bellows, with her charming, kind, encouraging smile, "is that Mr Chealey should go on crying and tell us everything."

"Yes, yes, Chealey; tell us everything," urged the General.

"While he cries," said Mrs Bellows, as one graciously pointing out an indispensable stipulation. "If Mr Chealey waits to tell us till he's left off crying and begun to recollect the things that perhaps alarm him a little, I'm afraid he'll only try to tell us what he thinks he ought to, and then we shall none of us be much further."

"I don't know how to tell you anything," sobbed Mr

Chealey. "I'm so ashamed—I don't—I can't——"

"Suppose Mr Chealey tells us to begin with if we were right in thinking him a house-agent," said Mrs Bellows graciously, "or, if not, what he actually is."

"Yes, yes, Chealey, tell us what you actually *are*," urged the General. It gave him such strong discomfort to look at Mr Chealey's tear-disfigured face that he left off looking at it, and, leaving his seat, began to walk in a disturbed manner up and down the hall.

Mr Chealey made a great effort to regain his self-control. He sat up, drew a long breath, and wiped his eyes.

"I'm afraid I'm what you thought I was," he faltered—"a house-agent."

"Well, well, what harm is there in that!" said the General strongly. "None whatever. A very respectable thing to be."

"Go on, Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows with benign serenity.

"At least it's what I'm *trying* to be," said Mr Chealey. The barriers that had lain between him and his hosts were gone. His faltering uncertain little mind, harried by the fear of imperiling the appearances so essential to the success of his despairing little hopes, confused by the need of pretence, and driven back into self-consciousness by the dread of repulse after every momentary escape, let everything go now except the relief

of letting go. He looked tremulously from one to the other. Neither in the absorbed countenance of the General nor in the gracious aspect of Mrs Bellows did he see what he so shrank from seeing in the faces of his fellow-creatures. There was no repulse. There was no need to struggle back to concealment from the point of betrayal to which the flood of his break-down had carried him. They wanted him to go on, even further, from betrayal to the infinite relief of revelation. Mr Chealey went on, with a trembling and hesitating voice and with catchings of the breath, but stammering no longer.

"It's only," he said, striving to smile apologetically through his tears, "that I don't seem somehow able to get a start. I used to be a head clerk in a big draper's office, you know. Of course it doesn't sound much to high-up gentlefolk like yourselves, but it was really quite a comfortable little position, I do assure you. But my firm had to fill up my place during the war, and when I was demobilised——"

"*Demobilised!*" said the General with a start. "Good God, Caroline, he's an ex-soldier! He would be! One of thousands flung out on the roads like this. Good God! But you didn't *join* up, I expect, Chealey," said the General, halting abruptly and in sudden hope in front of Mr Chealey. "You were probably *conscripted*, weren't you, Chea-

ley? No fault of yours, of course, but one naturally feels more strongly about those who *joined* up, you know."

"I'm afraid I did join up, sir," said Mr Chealey, hesitatingly. "It really seemed almost my duty to do so in 1914, me being unmarried. Of course I see now——"

"Good God, Caroline, he *joined* up! He *is* another of them!" said the General.

He relinquished his last hope of not having to feel strongly, and recommenced his walk in a still more disturbed manner about the hall. The matter now, to the General, had taken on an entirely different aspect.

"It wasn't," explained Mr Chealey earnestly—"it wasn't that I didn't see quite well that I couldn't possibly ever be anything of a soldier, sir. It wasn't that I didn't see that. It wasn't——"

"Explain to Mr Chealey, Herbert," said Mrs Bellows' irreproachably kind, indolent voice, "that there is no need for him to apologise."

"*Apologise!*" said the General, halting again in his surprise. "What's he got to apologise for?"

"It would be rather difficult to say," said Mrs Bellows reflectively. "But perhaps he has come across that natural little feeling there seems to be in the country now that it was rather careless of people to go joining up in the way they did, and that ex-soldiers have to be explained and apologised for, though quite a large number

of employers are very kind in overlooking it, I believe," added Mrs Bellows graciously. "Still, there's no need for Mr Chealey to apologise here. Do go on, Mr Chealey. You can't have told us nearly everything yet."

"There isn't much more to tell, madam," said Mr Chealey sorrowfully. "I couldn't get a job anywhere, and I couldn't think what to do or be. I tried every agency I could hear of that was finding work for soldiers, but they couldn't find any for me."

"There is no work," said the General shortly. "And not nearly enough money either. I've tried them again and again myself. It's not their fault. Go on, Chealey."

"And at last," went on Mr Chealey, "I thought I'd try to be a house-agent. I've always had a fondness for buildings. I love buildings. I do indeed. And so many people seem to be letting houses and taking them just now that I thought a little work might perhaps come my way. I've always been a careful kind of man, and I had my little savings, and, of course, during the war one spent nothing, and then there was the gratuity, and so I thought I was justified in taking a little office in Cheltenham—a very little one—and I put in a few advertisements—as many as I could afford. And all—and all——" Mr Chealey stopped, and choked, and sat desperately silent.

"Go on, Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows.

"It's nothing—it's nothing—I'm ashamed——" said Mr Chealey hurriedly, hoarse with the tears he was swallowing. "But all my money's gone, and nothing's come of it."

"Yet," said Mrs Bellows graciously.

Mr Chealey gazed at her through his tears.

"What's that you say, Caroline," said the General, pausing in his perturbed walk.

"Yet," said Mrs Bellows. "Mr Chealey says that nothing's come of it yet. Do go on, Mr Chealey. And is Cheltenham a good place for a house-agency?"

"I don't know that it is so especially good, madam," said Mr Chealey, forcing his strained voice to answer her conversational tone appropriately. "There are so many big house-agencies there already, you see. I did venture to approach one or two of them, but I don't think they quite liked a new man trying to make a beginning near them. It was bound to be like that wherever one looked. There's always somebody doing already what you want to do yourself wherever you start. And what I hoped was that with Gloucestershire such a favourite county as it is, and so much work about as there seemed to be in Cheltenham, a little of it might perhaps come my way. If I could have got just *one* house to advertise, to make a start with! But I didn't seem able to. Nobody wanted to employ an unknown

beginner, and of course it was quite natural. It isn't that I don't see that. But after a bit I had to pawn my belongings, and then my clothes; and it's so difficult to keep as respectable-looking as you needs must if anybody's going to think well of you when you've only the one suit, and the nap of that raised so dreadfully on end, so to speak, that you can't get the dust out of it, however hard you try," said Mr Chealey apologetically; "and at last I thought—I thought——" He faltered, and stopped again.

"Yes, Mr Chealey?" said Mrs Bellows.

"Well, at last I thought, madam," said Mr Chealey, "that I'd try going round *asking* people. Letters aren't much use, you see. Nobody takes much notice of letters. And quite right not to, and perfectly natural," added Mr Chealey hurriedly as the General emitted a brief remorseful groan. "But I thought if I went and *put* it to people—sometimes if you put a thing into people's heads they'll do it even if they haven't thought of it for themselves before, especially with the wonderful prices and rentals you can get nowadays. So I looked up some houses—though I haven't before ventured to try one as beautiful and well known as this," interpolated Mr Chealey humbly, "and I started going round asking. But it wasn't that I didn't see that it was an unpleasant kind of thing

for people to have done to them, madam. It wasn't that I didn't see that all along. And when you asked me in here to rest with such kindness I could scarcely bring myself—I could hardly bring myself—it wasn't that I didn't see that people might dislike it, I do assure you."

"You see it much too plainly for success, Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows with a smile. "It makes other people see it too, and become instantly filled with natural indignation."

"Why should they become instantly filled with natural indignation?" said the General strongly. "It was a most obvious thing for Chealey to do, and a very good idea."

"I thought, sir, I feared——" said Mr Chealey in faint surprise.

"And has it been any good, Mr Chealey?" said Mrs Bellows.

Mr Chealey looked at her, trying with a smile to conceal the misery in his eyes.

"Well, no, madam, *not* very much," he said. "I can't say it has, exactly. I think perhaps, as you suggest, that I don't do it quite rightly somehow. People do mostly seem to get a little annoyed. Not that—I mean—that is—they've every reason——"

"Reason!" said the General strongly. "What reason have they to get annoyed! Most unfair and unjust!"

"Anyway, sir," said Mr Chealey, endeavouring to call up a sprightly air and rising

from his chair, "this is the last time I shall do it! I haven't got any more money to spend on return-tickets, so I can't try it again. And now I must—that is—I ought—that is, I must be going. I've taken up quite enough of your time with all my little worries as it is. I can't—I shall never—I couldn't," said Mr Chealey, struggling not to give way again. "I shall never forget the kindness I have received here, not if I live to be a hundred! I'm ashamed to think of the way I've behaved. I——"

"Sit down, Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows.

"Yes, sit down, Chealey," said the General, walking abstractedly about the hall. "The thing is, Chealey, the only point left is—how am I best going to help you! Now I fully realise, Chealey," said the General emphatically, coming to a stop on the other side of the table and facing Mr Chealey, "I fully realise that you don't want to be helped in that way. I fully realise that you didn't come here for that kind of help. But what I say is, in these hard times we've got to help each other, and we've got to let ourselves be helped. I don't speak only as man to man. I speak as soldier to soldier. I'm not going to let an ex-soldier go away from my door unhelped. It's not a thing you need think twice about, Chealey, and it won't be a gift. It will be a loan, and you can repay me

when you're on your feet again."

But a slow flush had risen to Mr Chealey's face.

"Oh, sir, I couldn't, I couldn't," he said.

"Why on earth not?" said the General strongly.

"How should I ever be able to pay you back?" said Mr Chealey agitatedly, "me that can't make enough even to pay for my own living! And where should I be when the money was gone? Just where I am now, with a debt on me into the bargain. I shouldn't be able to sleep of nights, sir, if I had a debt on me. There's two things I haven't done yet: made a debt or taken a dole——" added Mr Chealey in a quavering voice.

"But, good God, man, how else *can* I help you!" said the General loudly. "I'd do anything in the world for an ex-soldier, but I can't sell my home or let it, and go wandering all over the earth, just to start you as a house-agent! Now I put it to you! *Can* I?"

"No, no, of course not—I never—not for a moment—of course not," said Mr Chealey, horrified.

"Well, then, what *can* I do?" said the General, beginning to walk up and down again. "I could recommend you to my friends, of course, but what use is that going to be to you? It may be months before any of them happen to want a house or happen to ask me if I know of a house-agent! You might be dead of

hunger months before it happened. And how else am I going to help you if you won't accept a loan?"

"Oh, but I think we can easily give Mr Chealey the letting of the house," said Mrs Bellows gracefully.

The General stopped dead in his walk and swung round agast.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"Easily," said Mrs Bellows.

"Give him the letting of the

house!" repeated the General dazedly; "the *letting* of it! Are you dreaming, Caroline? But I don't *want* to let King's Lodge. I've never *thought* of letting it. Good God, Caroline, you don't mean to say you think I ought to let King's Lodge in order to help Chealey to be a house-agent!" said the General in horrified anxiety.

"Oh no," said Mrs Bellows. "I don't mean that."

II.

On the following Saturday morning General Bellows sat at his breakfast-table surrounded by the open sheets of several newspapers. Directly Mrs Bellows appeared, a vision of indolent grace in a highly unsuitable pale-green gown, he addressed her briefly.

"It's out, Caroline," he said.

"Is it?" said Mrs Bellows in her serene detached voice.

"It is," said the General. "In the 'Morning Post' and the 'Wilts. and Glos.,' and the 'Cheltenham Chronicle.' You had better read it."

He pushed one of the newspapers towards Mrs Bellows, and she read:—

"TO Be Let. Unique, celebrated, and exquisite little old gentleman's house seated high in the Cotswolds. Well known as small show-place. In beautiful condition. Perfect views, splendid hunting, pillared portico, spacious rooms, panelled hall. Excellent drainage, centuries old, moderate size, easily worked by quite small staff. Lovely deer-park,

central heating. King Charles' Balcony, with two bathrooms, h. and c. Deeply Interesting Historical Associations freely mingled with Every Possible Modern Improvement. All applications, without exception, to be made to

The Sole and Only Agent,
Mr CHEALEY of Cheltenham,
3 Billikin Street."

"Very nice indeed," said Mrs Bellows, floating gracefully on to her place at the table. "And most attractive. Every one will want to possess a deer-park with central heating, and a royal balcony upon which you can take two hot-and-cold baths. Priggles is the quite small staff, of course, and I suppose you are the unique, celebrated, and exquisite little old gentleman, Herbert."

The General paid no heed to these remarks. He kept his resolute gaze fixed firmly upon his wife.

"Now, Caroline," he said, "there's one thing I want you

to understand very clearly. We can't weaken over this business. It's got to be seen through."

"I thought that was the one thing it wasn't to be," murmured Mrs Bellows.

"I am speaking seriously, Caroline," said the General, with some severity. "This business has got to be seen *through*. Now that the advertisement is out—and I consider that Chealey has got everything in very successfully indeed—I presume that whatever is going to happen will begin to do so very shortly, and I don't suppose it will be particularly pleasant. But whatever it is, it's got to be seen through. I have been thinking the whole matter over, and I'm going to do it without a scruple, though I suppose there are plenty of people who would say I oughtn't to lend myself to any such thing."

"Perhaps they would be the kind of people who never lend anything to anything," said Mrs Bellows placidly.

"That's as may be," said the General. "Whoever they are I don't care what they say. It's a question of principle. Chealey stands for a lot more than Chealey. He's not going to be forced to a dole or a debt. He's going to be helped to earn his own living, and I see no other way of doing it, and whatever happens I'm going to see him through."

With the aspect of a man resolutely sweeping all considerations but one from his

mind—and finding it the easier because it was a thing that was apt to happen in his mind by itself even when he didn't do it on purpose—the General pushed the newspapers aside and attacked his breakfast.

On the following Monday morning the first thing that was going to happen began to do so, and a shower of type-written letters descended on the breakfast-table of King's Lodge. Every house-agent within a hundred miles wrote with anxiety to point out to General Bellows what a frightful mistake, if only for his own sake, he was making in not employing them to let his house for him. General Bellows surveyed these altruistic lamentations with strong distaste and equally strong approval. The agents had clearly all fallen upon the advertisement like eagles upon a carcase, and had sent post-haste to Mr Chealey of Cheltenham to find out the name of the unique, celebrated, and exquisite little old gentleman's house.

"That shows what a lift this is going to be to Chealey," said the General with stern satisfaction. "All these confounded fellows are as keen as mustard to get the letting of King's Lodge."

"Perhaps they're a little upset at the house being given to an outsider," said Mrs Bellows with reflective grace. "King's Lodge isn't quite unknown, you see, and Mr Chealey is."

"He won't be by the time

we've done with him," said the General grimly. "Let them go on being upset. It's their turn to be."

At this moment Mr Priggles entered with the morning papers, and Mrs Bellows' serene gaze followed him as he arranged them, with his usual elaborately abstracted air, in a neat layer, beautifully stitched and ironed, near the General's right hand.

"The papers, sir," murmured Mr Priggles, bowing, and made his majestically unobtrusive exit.

"I believe," said Mrs Bellows, "that Priggles sometimes reads the 'Wilts. and Glos.' on Sunday afternoons."

The General lifted his head from his breakfast and looked at Mrs Bellows.

"Does he?" he said.

"Well, I think so," said Mrs Bellows. "I remember I once asked for it one Sunday, and Ambrosine said would I mind waiting for it a little, because Priggles had shut up to his bedroom and was sleeping with it. As if it were a sort of wife," added Mrs Bellows.

"I think, Caroline——" said the General.

"Oh, it was only Ambrosine's funny English," said Mrs Bellows. "And perhaps he sometimes reads it before he sleeps with it, and if so he may have been struck yesterday by the King's Balcony and the deer-park and all the other details. Anyway, you see, he must guess *something* sooner or

later, when people begin to come to see the house."

A slight frown contracted the General's brow. He perceived that a possible perplexity might be arising on his path towards the object upon which his thoughts were concentrated. He took instant steps to sweep it out of his way.

"Then tell him," he said abruptly; "tell him at once. What you're to tell him I don't know, but you'll have to think of something. I don't see how you can possibly tell him everything, but one thing he can understand from the first, and that is that I'll have no fuss or nonsense about it from him or any one."

"Oh, I think it would be a great mistake to tell him *everything*," said Mrs Bellows with graceful serenity; and Mr Priggles re-entering at that moment with the eggs and bacon, "Priggles," she said, in her friendly detached way, "we have advertised that King's Lodge is to let."

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles, with a total absence of surprise which went far to confirm Mrs Bellows' surmise that he sometimes read the 'Wilts. and Glos.' before he slept with it.

"And nobody, Priggles," continued Mrs Bellows, "is ever to be let in to see the house without an order to view from Mr Chealey of Cheltenham."

"Certainly not," said the General strongly. "Ever."

"Thank you, madam," said

Mr Priggles. "Mr Chealey. Of Cheltenham. And shall you be making any changes in the 'ouse'old, madam, if I may presoom so far?"

"Changes!" said the General, surprised. "Why on earth should we make any changes, man?"

"Oh no, Priggles," said Mrs Bellows graciously.

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles. "It does sometimes follow, sir, if I may presoom so far. And I 'ope it isn't for any peecoaniary reason that you're thinking of letting, madam, if I may make so bold, with the natural feelings of the 'ouse'old for the family and the times what they h'are."

"Good God, no!" said the General emphatically. "Nothing of the kind. As a matter of fact, we——"

"Oh no, Priggles, thank you," said Mrs Bellows graciously, with her calm eyes upon the General.

"Thank you, madam," said Mr Priggles. "Then one 'ouse is much the same as another to the 'ouse'old, thank you, madam," and he retired with a majestic bow and the porridge plates.

On the following Tuesday morning the next thing happened, in the form of a letter from Mr Chealey himself. Tuesday being the first cub-hunting day of the season, and the more distant coverts of King's Lodge being the place appointed for it, the General was a vision of neatness in exactly

the right apparel and a rather roused and absorbed frame of mind, owing to his natural anxiety lest everything and everybody should not combine to get him off in good time with a good breakfast inside him. But he forgot his absorption in this important aim when the post arrived and he saw the Cheltenham postmark among his letters. The General's previous absorption rushed instantly back upon his mind and eliminated every other.

"Chealey!" he said, and opened the letter.

"Most Honoured, Most Dear Revered Respected Sir," said Mr Chealey.

"Good God, Caroline!" said the General not unnaturally, pausing to gaze at Mrs Bellows.

"He's almost choked with gratitude, poor little thing," said Mrs Bellows. "Very right and nice. Go on, Herbert."

"Most Honoured, Most Dear Revered Respected Sir," read the General, "I beg your permission most humbly to inform you that I have had the great happiness of receiving, since the insertion of the advt. *re* King's Lodge, thirty-eight applications to view the same: to wit, twenty-eight letters, five telegrams, two telephonic, and three personal inquiries."

"Good God, Caroline!" said

the General, again pausing to gaze at Mrs Bellows.

It must be remembered, by the way, that this was in 1919, when everybody was still taking everything they could everywhere except thought for the morrow, and when even those who had succeeded in taking a pig-sty walked chortling about it among their friends.

"Go on, Herbert," said Mrs Bellows.

The General paid no heed. He sat gazing fixedly into space. He was perceiving a vision of undoubted horror, not before fully realised, but lying unquestionably before him on the road he meant to travel.

"Thirty - eight!" he said. "Good God! They'll be all over the place like flies."

He remained for a moment in stern contemplation of this evidently unavoidable trial—both of the resolution in possession of his mind and of his concentrated allegiance to the more than Mr Chealey that Mr Chealey stood for. Then with a determined hand he swept it out of his way, and returned unswervingly to the thought whose claim he had decided upon as sovereign.

"A very excellent thing for Chealey," he said firmly, and he picked up the letter again and went on reading.

"Have I your leave, Most Respected Sir," said Mr Chealey, "to select the more suitable and eminent of these persons and give them orders to view ?

I need not say I should not dream of doing this without an express and considered confirmation of the permission you have already so nobly given me. I dread, Most Honoured Sir, the trouble I may be giving you. I dread the difficulties and unpleasantnesses that may possibly arise. Dear Sir, I can see no reason why you should allow me to do it. If you have, on further consideration, as may well be the case, changed your mind with regard to the extraordinary favour you and your Honoured Lady thought in your generous kindness to bestow upon me, believe, Most Respected Sir, that I shall most fully understand and applaud your decision, and shall ever feel the better for the great goodness that prompted your first intention. I urge you, Dear Sir, to think again before you grant me permission to give these orders to view, which may cause you the utmost inconvenience.—I am, Dear Dear Sir, with the greatest respect and gratitude, your very humble, thankful, and obedient servant,

"CHARLES CHEALEY."

"Mr Chealey," said Mrs Bellows benignly, "shows people the way out of helping him with such earnestness and consideration that it's a wonder anybody ever doesn't take it. His one anxiety appears to be to enable them to travel it without a pang of self-reproach or sorrow."

"He writes a very good letter," said the General briefly, laying it down upon the table.

"Sweet," said Mrs Bellows. "And so exactly like an ancestor's."

"And he shows a great deal of proper feeling," said the General. "I respect Chealey. I respect and like him. What's this especial difficulty and unpleasantness that he alludes to, Caroline?"

"I don't think it's anything that we can't overcome," said Mrs Bellows serenely.

"Will the whole thirty-eight turn up at once?" said the General.

"Oh no, dear," said Mrs Bellows benevolently. "Mr Chealey is only going to select the more suitable and eminent, and even those will only come in spots."

"Let them come," said the General shortly. "In spots or otherwise."

"Some of them, of course, may be in checks," said Mrs Bellows; but before the General could reply a loud "honk" sounded outside on the sweep.

"Priggles came in some little time ago, I think, to say the car was there," said Mrs Bellows.

"Good God," said the General, suddenly recalled to the fact that he had actually forgotten that he was going cub-hunting, and he hurriedly re-attached his half-finished breakfast.

On the following Wednesday afternoon the General was just stepping comfortably out on

to the King's Balcony with the newspaper, intending there to enjoy his after-luncheon cigarette, when he suddenly stopped dead. The next thing had begun to happen, and up the straight long drive from the gates there was rolling a perfect procession of vehicles, all travelling towards the house as fast as they respectively could. First there came the Lorton Station Hotel motor-car, and then the Lorton Station Hotel fly, and then the Lorton Station Hotel motor-cycle, this last shrieking in one long unbroken yell because it was being carefully kept by the narrowness of the drive from passing the station fly. To the back of the knickerbockered long-haired gentleman who rode the motor-cycle there was clinging, like a barnacle on a whelk, an extraordinarily short-skirted female, and the general impression the General received in the fleeting glance at it which was all he had time for, was one of indiscriminate legs and hair, all streaming impartially together both fore and aft, as it were. He sank swiftly down into the nearest deck-chair. The broad balcony balustrade hid him completely from any one below, but every sound came up to him and every word.

The motor-car rolled into the portico underneath the balcony, and shortly afterwards there arose a very loud noise. It appeared to take the form of a trio, in which, in increasing crescendo, two female voices

sustained the high parts, while Mr Priggles supplied the bass motif in a kind of recurrent recitative.

"But we *must* see the house, we've come *miles* to see the house, why *shouldn't* we see the house?" cried the high female voices.

"Sorry, ladies. Not without an order, ladies," said the imperturbable Mr Priggles.

"We haven't *got* an order, I tell you," cried the female voices. "Take up our cards to your mistress at once. We are the Miss Belchers of Belgrave Square. Why should we be refused entrance merely because we happen to have heard of the house from another agent!"

"Sorry, ladies. Not without an order, ladies," chanted the cold tones of the unmoved Mr Priggles.

"But it's most *important* that we should see the house before any one else does!" wailed the female voices hysterically.

"Sorry, ladies. Not without an order, ladies. From Mr Chealey. Of Cheltenham. Kindly order your motor to move on, ladies. It is blocking the h'approach."

"Good," said the General, and the motor rolled out of the portico, and rushed away down the drive. The General would not have been surprised to see smoke coming out of the windows. He thought with stern satisfaction of the fury and bitterness that must be seething within from the bosoms of

the thwarted Belchers of Belgrave Square, who had tried to steal a march on Mr Chealey's thirty-eight clients and had so signally failed. To two people, at any rate, the importance of Mr Chealey of Cheltenham was no longer unknown.

The motor rolled out, and the fly rolled in, and to the listening General above it sounded as if a whole congregation instantly fell out of it. They all apparently had orders to view, however, for they were let in without demur. So were the cycle riders, whose machine, still emitting that ear-rending noise like a man being sick without intermission on high C, which adds so much to the beauty of the sounds of our modern countryside, had come bursting and pushing up with the fly. No words can tell how the General hated that motor-cycle. With compressed lips and a resolute air he opened his newspaper.

But he had hardly done so when he heard voices and steps ascending the stairs and entering the balcony sitting-room. He rose with a start, and the next instant three gentlemen and three ladies, all stout, poured out on to the balcony, led by the floating and unmoved Mrs Bellows.

"Orders to view, Herbert dear," she said in graceful introduction. "From our excellent Mr Chealey of Cheltenham."

"Certainly," said the General, bowing; and the six stout orders to view all bowed back.

"Pretty view, isn't it?" said the General graciously.

"Lovely — topping — exquisite — topping — perfect — topping," murmured the six orders-to-view, gazing at the view in a highly embarrassed manner, as if it were somehow an improper spectacle and only to be viewed because they had orders to do so; and they all poured out again after Mrs Bellowes.

The General reseated himself in his deck-chair and reopened his newspaper with a firm countenance, but he had hardly done so when he again heard voices and steps entering the balcony sitting-room, and Mr Priggles, with incomparable stateliness, led forth upon the balcony the two cycle-riders. They had no hats and no calves, and the gentleman wore knickers like two short skirts and the lady a skirt like one short knicker, while the hairs of both hung round their heads in brief mouse-coloured curtains to their shoulders. The General rose from his chair.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr Priggles with majestic apology. "I did not know you were here, sir. Orders to view, sir. From Mr Chealey. Of Cheltenham."

"Certainly," said the General, bowing; and the two orders-to-view bowed back, very low and sweetly, amid their curtains of hair.

"Pretty view, isn't it?" said the General with rigid courtesy, striving not to show his detestation.

"And how exalting," said the gentleman, flinging back his locks, advancing one enraptured step towards the landscape, and waving his hand at it with an impassioned smile, "to sit thus lost before it in solemn contemplation as priests before the only God!"

"And what a perfect situation, dear Ernest," twittered his female companion in defiant if somewhat quavering tones as though she were determined not to be impressed by anything, especially Priggles, "for our unfettered life."

The disgusted and embittered countenance of Mr Priggles showed no evidence of any effort to conceal his detestation. "Kindly come this way at once," he said shortly and commandingly, leaving the balcony abruptly; and the orders-to-view bowed once more, very low and gracefully, and on coming erect departed after Mr Priggles somewhat incontinently, pushing each other through the balcony doorway.

The General sat down again, but this time he did not reopen his newspaper. He had the air of being speechless.

A short while afterwards the fly rolled forth from underneath the balcony and jig-jogged steadily away down the drive, and the motor-cycle shot out a little later in a moving cloud of appalling noise, and vanished through the gates in a series of explosions; and Mrs Bellowes came out serenely on to the balcony and sank comfortably into a chair.

"They've all taken the house, Herbert dear," she announced placidly.

"What!" said the General, sitting up with a fearful start.

"Well," said Mrs Bellows, "my party certainly has, and Priggles seems certain that his has too."

"Taken it!" repeated the General, gazing at his wife aghast. "Good God, Caroline! But they *can't* take it!"

"Well, they *think* they have," said Mrs Bellows with reflective grace.

The General collected himself. "Kindly explain what has happened, Caroline," he said sternly. "I presume this development is what you expected, and that you know how to deal with it. I shall be glad to hear what we do now."

"I don't think we do anything much," said Mrs Bellows. "You see, my party comes from Surbiton, where they made heaps of money in the war without profiteering once, they said. So clever of them. And when they decided they would take the house, I said how very sensible it was of them not to mind a bit about the old, old drains."

"The old, old drains!" said the astounded General. "Good God, Caroline, the drains are perfectly new! They're the last word in country sanitation."

"Well, the advertisement said they were centuries old, Herbert dear," said Mrs Bellows reproachfully, as she reposed in leisurely grace among

her cushions. "It's very difficult to contradict the advertisement. And anyway they aren't *main*, are they? You can't exactly call them main."

"*Main!*" exclaimed the General; "but, good God, Caroline, how on earth can they be main when there's not a main drain for twenty miles for them to be laid to!"

"No," said Mrs Bellows, in her indolent encouraging voice; "it's certainly not *your* fault, Herbert, but it seems that in Surbiton every drain is beautifully main. Anyway, the Surbitites were very grateful to me for drawing their attention to it, and they are going to ask Mr Chealey to ask you to make the drains main before they come in. I said that all negotiations must go through Mr Chealey, of course, and that even if you found you couldn't make the drains main, Mr Chealey was so clever that he would be sure to be able to find them another house quite as good as this—with all the drains main."

General Bellows sat in silence, gazing steadfastly at his wife.

"And Priggles's party," continued Mrs Bellows, gazing at the view, "free-loved."

"What!" said the startled General.

"Free-loved," said Mrs Bellows. "They were Communists, you know, and Communists always free-love. You can see they'd have to. They do it with their money too, and these seemed quite rich. But

Priggles hated them, poor things."

"Priggles showed his sense," said the General sternly. "Without knowing another word about that dreadful fellow, I could swear he was a conscientious objector."

"Still, I'm afraid Priggles did really harry them rather terribly through the house," said Mrs Bellows. "The Surbitites and I were constantly getting mixed up with them in passages, and they always looked so very pale and anxious, as though they were finding it almost impossible to keep on being wonderful. However, there are going to be thirty of them all living here together, Priggles says, and they are going to put up cubicles in most of the bedrooms. Though why, if you free-love," said Mrs Bellows, "you should want to put up——"

"Caroline——" said the General.

"So when Priggles came to tell me that his party had sent him to say they would take the house," continued Mrs Bellows, gazing at the view, "I saw them for a moment, and said how pleased I was, and how nice it seemed that they felt they could subscribe to the clause a landowner naturally feels bound to put into the lease of a county kind of little house like this, where you have to set a good example."

"What clause, Caroline?" said the General, gazing fixedly at Mrs Bellows.

"The one about attending church regularly twice a Sunday, Herbert dear," said Mrs Bellows.

"Good God!" said the General.

"However, they don't seem perfectly sure about it," said Mrs Bellows. "They said they were priests and priestesses of the worship of Nature, and sometimes experienced a little difficulty about the Ten Commandments, and I think they may be going to ask Mr Chealey to ask you not to put that clause into their lease. I said that *all* negotiations must go through Mr Chealey, of course, and that even if you found that you couldn't leave that clause out, Mr Chealey is sure to be able to find them a house in which nobody need set a good example, quite as nice as this."

The General sat in silence, gazing upon Mrs Bellows. He had the absorbed appearance of a man upon whom an entirely new and unexpected aspect of an idea already tenaciously in possession of his mind, and supported there with unswerving determination, was slowly dawning. For an instant he sat thus. Then he shut his mouth even more grimly than before. "Very well," he said, and he took up his newspaper and plunged into the leading article.

The Communists and the Surbitites were only the first of the long succession of people who came hastening to see King's Lodge that September

—and a good many of them were rather singular. That was to be expected. The singular shot up into light and air in hundreds of thousands the instant the war lifted off the earth, as flies shoot up when a lid is lifted. To the General Mr Chealey's clients appeared to arrive in hundreds, but he was not perhaps in a sufficiently disinterested position to be capable of keeping a very calm and careful count. Still, even to an impartial observer, it must have seemed certain that Mr Chealey had found it too difficult to determine which of his thirty-eight applicants were the more suitable and eminent, and had decided to send orders to them all. Mr Chealey's letters, more like those of an ancestor than ever, arrived also in great numbers. They now invariably began, "My Revered and Honoured Patron," and were almost incoherent in his endeavours to express, generally in the same sentence, his anguished apologies for the trouble he was giving, his timid and yet implicitly trusting anxiety over the method that was being employed, his boundless gratitude to his Honoured Patrons, and his trembling happiness at his increasing hopes of ultimate success.

For the people to whom a house of the type of King's Lodge was possible after the war, and who were tumbling over each other in the little office in Billiken Street in their anxiety to secure something of a sort so rarely in the market,

were not—however singular—those whom the war had exactly impoverished.

There was the lady with wonderful red hair and a beautiful slim figure and a lovely gown and a mouth like a slit and a voice like a cat's, for instance, whom some one had once told how charming and childlike it was of her to sit in an arm-chair with her feet tucked up. She lay curved exquisitely up in an arm-chair with her feet tucked sideways under her, and her hands along the arms, and said in a languid manner that King's Lodge was really quite decent, and would do quite well as a little extra place for occasional visits, and how fortunate it was that she had come across a house she could quite tolerate.

"Most fortunate," said Mrs Bellows with faultless kindness, while the General sat observing this new order-to-view with immaculate courtesy and the kind of reluctant interest and firm dislike felt by all right-minded men towards red-haired ladies curled up in chairs, "and I feel sure that Mr Chealey will gladly approach my husband on your behalf with a view to his waiving his little feeling about absentee tenants."

"What's that you say, Caroline?" said the General, coming out of his trance with a slight start.

"Oh, but," said the red-haired lady languidly, "we don't need to bother about the house-agent, do we, dear Gen-

eral? We'll do the bargaining with each other, won't we? You can consider the house definitely taken, for it's really quite a decent little bungalow, and I am sure you will find we are excellent tenants."

The General looked at Mrs Bellows, not helplessly or anxiously, but with a sort of stern expectancy, as one who knows for certain that a rope will shortly descend upon him in his hole, and therefore sits in it with self-command.

"I'm sure we shall," said Mrs Bellows graciously. "It's such a pleasure to us to feel you like our humble little villa in the country. I am sure that for your sake dear Herbert will most carefully reconsider his little feeling about our people on the estate not being left too much without any one in the house to look after them—won't you, Herbert?—and we shall look forward with so much pleasure to hearing from you very soon through Mr Chealey."

"Oh, pray expect to hear from me without any Mr Chealey, Mrs Bellows," said the red-haired lady with a quite nice polite little laugh. "I think agents are such silly unnecessary things between people of the same class—don't you, General?—once we know each other. And I am sure you realise that it's quite out of the question for any one in our position, with our villa at Monte, and London and all that, to use this funny little house for anything but occa-

sional visits, which is all we want it for. So we may consider that settled, mayn't we, General?" said the red-haired lady, smiling with perfect composure and propriety at the General out of her long sweet eyes, "and if you'll get the lease drawn up we will sign it at once."

"And if by any chance Herbert *should* find it difficult to overcome his little feeling about the estate," said Mrs Bellows benignly, "you mustn't despair, because Mr Chealey is so extraordinarily clever, so unique and lucky as a house-agent, that I'm sure he will easily find you another equally good Cotswold house, in which it won't really matter if you never stay at all."

"Oh, I promise I won't despair, Mrs Bellows," said the red-haired lady, smiling her little careless understanding smile at the General; and she said good-bye in a languid manner and went away in her Rolls-Royce, and it was really rather sad that she wasn't understanding anything at all, of course, when she was so securely certain that she was the beautiful amused woman who did. Beauty may doubtless be often blinding to the male beholder, or at any rate he is frequently politely willing to behave as if it were; but the blindness it causes to the beholder is nothing to the cloud of little misapprehensions that so singularly often hangs round its possessor.

"But she's quite a good

player," said Mrs Bellows approvingly.

"A good what?" said the General reservedly.

"Player," said Mrs Bellows. "She's got our languid, vacant, cold hard look so very well. You really scarcely ever find yourself wondering what back street first saw that lovely hair, or whether she came out of it in the war or after."

And there was the American gentleman who had made shells. He arrived, in spats and a large Tuxedo hat set sideways, when the General was away endeavouring to relieve the Windrush of some of its superfluous grayling; which was perhaps as well. Majestically conducted round by Mr Priggles, the American gentleman surveyed the whole house in an intent silence, only broken by an occasional murmur of "You don't say!" or "Do tell!" when Mr Priggles loftily conveyed to him some historical or other item calculated to establish in the mind of a foreigner a right sense of the glory of the family Mr Priggles served. But when he had seen everything, the American gentleman sent in his card to Mrs Bellows—"Mr Gideon O. Gilkicker," with "of the United States of America" pencilled beneath it; and on being ushered in to the oak parlour, he advanced upon Mrs Bellows, drew forth a large wad of bank-notes, and said with all the dynamic force of his progressive country driving at full pressure through his nose,

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am. I would wish to deposit upon this table the first year's rent for a twenty-year lease, and I want this house right here and nayow."

Mrs Bellows smiled her unmoved gracious smile.

"How very nice, Mr Gilkicker," she said benevolently. "Am I to understand that you would like the General and the servants and myself to leave by the 4.15 this afternoon?"

"I sure would," said Mr Gilkicker emphatically, "and your remarks do credit to the smartness of your intelligence, ma'am. But only a sucker would look to find as much pep as all that in *this* country, I reckon. No, ma'am; I've been led to believe that it's apt to be some job to get anything done in this country under a hundred years or so, and I'm willing to make all doo allowances for your national proclivities. You clear in a week, say, and I'll make that soot if you can't git quicker. But that's the limit! Doo allowances stop right there! I'm a business man from the States, and it is my aim, ma'am, to steer clear of Versailles and Sang Germang. I want you to understand from the word go that I propose to cut the usual British neegotiations right out of this little trade."

"I *quite* understand," said Mrs Bellows graciously. "Our slow methods must often be so very trying to your en-

lightened and energetic country."

"They sure are," said Mr Gilkicker with surprise and approval, "and I allow to have travelled from Noo York sorter determined that they were not going to be trying to *me*, ma'am. I'd gotta sorter hunch that it wasn't my enlightened and energetic country that was going to be tried when G. O. Gilkicker came over to do a trade in Great Britain. But I allow to have met with an exception. It appears to me that I was perhaps a trifle misled by my business friends in Amurrica concerning the obstructionist and reactionary tackticks I should find obtaining in this island."

"You live in England, Mr Gilkicker?" said Mrs Bellows with reflective grace.

"I don't kalkilate to live anywheres," said Mr Gilkicker. "I made my pile in the war, and I don't need to sit anywhere for keeps. This is my first visit to your shores, ma'am, and I reckon to use this little island like I do most all places, off and on as it soots with my convenience. Such being my aim, I would naturally wish to seecure a right old slap-up genwine mooseum British house, and I guess this little shack of yours suttently fills the bill. And you can feel real good and comfortable about the rent, ma'am," added Mr Gilkicker easily. "What we Amurricans want we can pay for. There's no talk in *our* country yet about repoodiat-

ing our bills—nor yet our debts."

Mrs Bellows looked at Mr Gilkicker with the same detached and faintly amused glance with which she looked at everybody. Then she said with unimpaired serenity and graciousness, "I am so glad to think, Mr Gilkicker, that I am helping you to pay a debt. Will you let me give you a cup of tea?"

Mr Gilkicker, after a moment's slight surprise, concluded that either he had not heard the first sentence aright, or else the lady had got a trifle mixed; and he replied to the second sentence affably. "Why, suttently, ma'am! I don't care if I do. I guess we can knock off the larst deetails of our little business over a cup of tea as slick as if we was trading over a glass of something stronger. It sure is gratifying to my feelings, ma'am, to meet with a lady who can thus rise sooperior to the proclivities of her native land."

When next observed, Mr Gilkicker was breaking the King's regulations at sixty miles an hour along the Cheltenham road, and the spirit of firm resolve in which Mr Gilkicker had travelled from New York towards his coming conflict with the business methods of the British Isles was nothing to the dynamic force of the determination with which he was now travelling to Cheltenham. He was on his way to the office of the agent who had

sent him the order to view King's Lodge; and from that office it was Mr Gilkicker's intention that there should shortly burst forth upon the Cotswolds such a demonstration of American energy, will-power, and hustle as should pulverise the obsolete dog-in-the-manger, fit-for-the-tomb national proclivities of old man Bellows into dust as fine as was presumably that of that other old British back number, not more extinct than old man Bellows himself, King Charles the Second. No long-deceased one-time tenant of King's Lodge was more entirely suited to a grave, in the opinion of Mr Gilkicker, than its present tenant, old man Bellows, believed alive.

This swift and sudden transit of Mr Gilkicker from the King's Lodge tea-table to the Cheltenham road had been effected by scarcely more than ten minutes' conversation with the lady whose superiority to the procrastinating proclivities of her nation had so surprised and gratified him. In the first place, his attention roused by a chance remark, Mr Gilkicker had had no difficulty in skilfully eliciting from Mrs Bellows the fact that there *were* perhaps one or two things to be said against King's Lodge, in spite of its unique charm and attractions. Its exceedingly isolated position, perhaps—great difficulties and drawbacks did certainly sometimes arise from *that*, for instance,—and then its really very limited

accommodation for the requirements of modern entertaining, and its undeniably rather archaic bathing arrangements—Mr Gilkicker gathered it all in and made his decision with admirable celerity. Shucks, ma'am, that didn't matter the toss of a cent. It was certainly impossible for a man of his wealth, position, affairs, energy, modernity, and nationality to find his activities curtailed by the limitations of the Middle Ages, and Mr Gilkicker had no intention that they should be. The spending of a few thousand of the dollars made out of shells on such simple necessities as a second telephone wire and a new wing and a palm-lounge and a macadam road and a private telegraph wire and a suite of bathrooms was sure an easy matter. Mr Gilkicker would get hold of the best man for the job right there and then that night in London, and send him down next day to make the necessary plans for the improvements. Judge of the feelings of Mr Gilkicker when the next words fell gently from the lips of Mrs Bellows, "But I'm so much afraid, Mr Gilkicker, that my husband might object to King's Lodge being improved."

Mr Gilkicker started violently. Then for one moment he restrained himself. He would make certain that this incredible thing was true. But Mrs Bellows remained graciously unshaken. She could only say that she was dreadfully afraid that her husband

might actually refuse to allow his house to be improved, and she feared that the only course was to approach him at once through his agent, a man whom Mrs Bellows could warmly recommend as most prompt and assiduous in the prosecution of all business, and likely to give even Mr Gilkicker entire satisfaction.

A gleam lit in Mr Gilkicker's eye. Refuse to allow a place to be improved, and the obsolete to be brought up to date, and a limited little house to be developed to a mansion! Refuse thus immensely to increase the value and smartness and size of his dwelling, even though he wasn't going to live in it himself, and another man's money was going to be spent on it! Mr Gilkicker's face wore the same expression as must have been seen on the countenance of the old lady who found a burglar under her bed. This was what he had expected! Here it was! Exactly! The British reeactionary and obstructionist tackticks! His friends in Amurrica had *not* misled him! A few minutes later the dust of Mr Gilkicker's vanished 90-h.p. Mercedes was swirling in the empty drive of King's Lodge, and Mr Gilkicker was on his way to seize upon this Chealey of Cheltenham, through whom it would apparently be possible to deal efficiently with old man Bellows. Old man Bellows should learn what happened when British national proclivities came into conflict with American

enlightenment and progressiveness! The tyres of the Mercedes trundled faster than ever along the Cheltenham road at the thought.

And there was the rather dreadful day when the General happened to be alone, and Mrs de Piercy-Evans, the relict of a Wesleyan Cardiff shipowner, came to see the house. She was a lady with a faint voice and a suffering face and a feeble smile, and she arrived on a day when Mr Priggles was having his afternoon out, and when Mrs Bellows was paying a call near Burford; and as Mrs Bellows' car turned into the drive on her return home it passed another car just coming out, in which was reclining a lady in tears. Mrs Bellows went to look for the General when she reached the house, and found him seated in his study with a rather serious countenance reading a book, in itself a somewhat unusual occurrence. Immediately on perceiving his wife he laid the book down, and said, "Did you meet her?"

"Well, I passed a lady weeping in the drive, Herbert dear," said Mrs Bellows.

"I can only assure you, Caroline," said the General, "that I did my best."

"I am sure you did," said Mrs Bellows. "Why was she weeping in the drive?"

"She said I was a snake," said the General.

"She can have been a person of *no* imagination," murmured Mrs Bellows.

"Well, of course, Caroline, we can't pretend we don't see why she thought I was perhaps a snake," said the General. "But I can only assure you I did my utmost. I showed her the whole house. I showed her everything, and I told her everything, and I answered all her questions most carefully. We must have been over two hours going into everything, and I don't think you could have done it better yourself. And at the end she said she would take the house, and I said she couldn't."

"Dear Herbert," murmured Mrs Bellows sympathetically, "and did you give her any reason why she couldn't."

"Good God, Caroline, of course I didn't," said the General. "How could I have given her a reason when the only reason was the one I couldn't give! I merely said she couldn't, and she can't. No one could have said it more kindly. I told her again and again that I was sorry she couldn't."

"And what did she do?" said Mrs Bellows.

"She burst into tears and said I was a snake," said the General, gazing at Mrs Bellows. "She said that instead of taking her weak heart perpetually up and down the stairs, I ought to have told her at once that I had taken a dislike to her personal appearance and never meant her to have the house from the first. You could have knocked me down with a feather. I never

even saw her personal appearance! She wasn't the kind of woman who *had* a personal appearance."

"Oh, poor thing, Herbert dear," said Mrs Bellows reflectively. "And did you tell her that Mr Chealey would be sure to be able to find her another house quite as nice as this?"

"How could I tell a howling woman about Chealey or anything else?" said the General with stern remonstrance. "I was far too busy trying to get her to take some brandy or tea or something. It was a most awful experience. I can't help it if I forgot Chealey. And I think, Caroline, it would be better if you arranged never to go out at all till we've seen this business through, in case this kind of thing should happen again. It was impossible to help forgetting all about Chealey, and I'm afraid that howling woman is going to be no good to him whatever."

But though it is possible that the embittered Mrs de Piercy-Evans did not again apply to the house-agent who had been the means of introducing her to a snake, the case was very different with the rest of Mr Chealey's thirty-eight orders-to-view. It can only be concluded that, on recovering from the surprise of finding that they had not taken King's Lodge—for unimpeachable reasons most apologetically and humbly conveyed to them by Mr Chealey on

behalf of General Bellows,—they had felt that they could not perhaps do better than let the house-agent who wrote so earnestly and anxiously, and who had been so warmly and expressly recommended to them by the gracious and sympathetic mistress of King's Lodge, try what he could do for them. Some of them may have thought that an agent who really seemed to be almost on a footing of personal friendship with those distinguished people, the owners of King's Lodge, might be likely to know of houses not advertised by the usual channels; others again, after having once seen the Cotswolds, may have felt that they could not bear to relinquish the hope of finding a house among them, and knew no other Cotswold agent but Mr Chealey; still others may have decided that a house-agent whose leading characteristic seemed to be the most singular one of an overwhelming personal anxiety that they should get what they wanted, and who appeared never to send them to see a semi-detached villa in Eastbourne when they were looking for a manor-house in Gloucestershire, was one to be clung to at all costs and hazards. And some of the more progressive and enlightened may have been soothed by Mr Chealey's humble and vivid perception of the superior advantages enjoyed by nearly everybody except himself.

At any rate, one modest little statement had already

emerged in the 'Wilts. and Glos.' :—

"MR CHEALEY of Cheltenham would be glad to hear from owners of houses in Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties who are willing to let or sell, as he has several applicants for the same. 3 Billikin Street."

And one of Mr Chealey's letters had already conveyed with happy agitation the splendid news that such was the pressure of his business that he had been obliged to engage a boy to answer the door. But now there appeared, in all the local papers and a London daily, an advertisement that put the other one completely in the shade :—

"MR CHEALEY of Cheltenham, having a large number of clients of eminence, position, and wealth, both American and English, who are anxious to buy or rent houses of prominence and character in the Cotswolds, would be glad to hear at once from owners who are willing to let or sell, which they may do at the present juncture at great advantage to themselves. 3 Billikin Street."

And shortly afterwards Mr Chealey, with such tremulous joy and gratitude and thankfulness that his pen was unable to convey his feelings except in broken and entirely incoherent sentences, wrote to say that the work was becoming more than he could possibly cope with alone, and that he believed he would very shortly have to engage a clerk.

And then came the Wopsleys of Wick.

They hurried in on General and Mrs Bellows in a torrent

of exclamations, waving their order - to - view; and the appalled General had only time to ejaculate *sotto voce* to his wife, "Good God, Caroline! The Wopsleys! To take the house! People we *know*!" when the Wopsleys, outstripping the indignant Mr Priggles, were upon them with outstretched hands.

"Caroline!" cried Lady Wopsley of Wick. "Dearest! Impossible! How *too* divine! When the agent in Cheltenham wrote that that advertised house was actually King's Lodge, *your* King's Lodge, I *shrieked*! We *couldn't* believe it! Are you really letting King's Lodge, the exquisite King's Lodge!"

"We have certainly advertised it to let," said Mrs Bellows with faultless graciousness.

"Too bad, too bad, too bad!" said Lord Wopsley of Wick, pityingly.

"Oh, you poor things!" cried Lady Wopsley of Wick. "The war, I suppose! Hard hit like all the rest of us! But if you've *got* to let, it would anyhow be a comfort to let to old old friends like us, and not to strangers, *wouldn't* it?"

Mrs Bellows had first met and been kind to her "old old friend" in a Brighton hotel before Miss Agatha Topp, as she then was, had succeeded in attaching herself to the industrious little solicitor, Samuel Solomons, as *he* then was, who had since succeeded in attaching himself to his party—with

such well-directed moderation and lack of narrow zeal that, during an unusual dearth of even nonentities among the great men of England, he had been unanimously selected by both parties as Secretary of State for War, in the comfortable certainty that though he might have no knowledge or experience whatever that could fit him for the post, he had also not a vestige of anything strong enough to be called a political conviction. And he was now Lord Wopsley of Wick, having, with every justification, taken his title from a village near the golf-course of which he had built himself a handsome yellow brick Gothic mansion fully ten years before.

"But we must not be too precipitate!" he now cried gaily. "We must not be premature! We must remember that our good friends may already have promised the house to some one, Agatha!"

"Oh, dearest Caroline, don't say so!" cried Lady Wopsley. "Promise you won't let it to any one else!"

"I think we can safely promise not to let it to any one else," said Mrs Bellows benignly.

"And *might* we see over it!" said Lady Wopsley, clasping her hands. "*Would* it be too much trouble, dearest Caroline?"

So the Wopsleys of Wick saw over King's Lodge. They went over everything inside and out, and louder and louder waxed their exclamations of

admiration and delight. These old friends had somehow never yet been asked to stay at King's Lodge, so all was new to them, and they sang pæans of universal praise; while Mrs Bellows floated along unmoved and gracious, and the General brought up the rear in silence, listening to Lord Wopsley's enthusiastic comments with admirable self-command, and merely glancing at him without a word when he ecstasically expatiated upon the beauty of the lodges. The General did not love the Wopsleys, but that was the least of the reasons which kept his ears strained to catch every sentence of the conversation proceeding between the ladies in front.

They finished their inspection in the cellars where the big furnaces stood, and returned to the oak parlour for tea, and Lady Wopsley sank joyfully into a chair, and looked round her with the light of possession already in her eye.

"We take it, Caroline!" she cried. "We take it on the spot! It's *exactly* what we want for a hunting-box, dear! There's no hunting round Wopsley, and though, of course, Samuel and I don't hunt, so *many* people do, and then the children—you can hardly expect a boy to live up to the traditions of his rank, *can* you, unless he has hunted in his boyhood. We'll take it on the spot! Those beautiful big furnaces have *quite* decided me! I *had* feared the house might be a little cold—so high up,

you know, and these old places—I thought I felt just a little draught or two upstairs. But with all that lovely central heating——"

"Do you perhaps mean the little cold air that passed us on the landing of the stairs?" said Mrs Bellows, in her charming indolent voice, as she poured out the tea with her usual grace. "Oh, that wasn't a draught. That was the ghost. Do you like sugar in your tea, Agatha?"

"That was the *what*?" said Lady Wopsley with a start.

"Well, it's said to be a ghost," said Mrs Bellows, handing round the cups. "You could hardly expect an old place like this not to have ghosts, of course. It's supposed to have several. It's really quite well known in the countryside as a haunted house. Tea, Lord Wopsley?"

"*Ghosts!*" said Lady Wopsley with a gasp, staring at Mrs Bellows. "Not *really*, Caroline!"

"Tut, tut!" said Lord Wopsley gaily. "Who believes in such nonsense nowadays? I felt no draught upon the stairs! And pray what kind of ghosts are they, Mrs Bellows, that haunt you in such numbers?"

"Oh, quite nice ghosts," said Mrs Bellows, smiling at him benignly. "There's wicked old Cramp Ditton, for instance. The people in the lodges say they often hear his coach and four crashing up the drive at midnight, as it used to do hundreds of years ago, to join

King Charles in one of his carousals. But I don't see why he shouldn't come up the drive if he wants to. He does nobody any harm. And then there's the invisible ghost on the stairs, of course. But she matters still less. You never even hear her. Give Lord Wopsley the milk, Herbert dear."

"What *do* you do, then?" said Lady Wopsley, with an irrepressible shudder.

"Oh, really almost nothing," said Mrs Bellows, graciously preoccupied with the wants of her guests. "At night they say you merely feel her passing near you, but in the daytime it is even less than that—no more than a little cold air suddenly blowing by. And sugar, Lord Wopsley?"

"Ha, ha, how ridiculous!" said Lady Wopsley, with a rather hollow laugh. "But—dearest Caroline—tell me—just for the interest of the thing—is this house *really* supposed to be haunted?"

"Oh yes, it's really *supposed* to be," said Mrs Bellows, smiling her kind encouraging smile. "But then, so are nearly all old places, you know. There's nothing in that. Will you have some more cake, Agatha?"

"And do you yourself believe in all these wonderful tales, Mrs Bellows?" said Lord Wopsley with a hearty laugh.

"Oh, I——" said Mrs Bellows benevolently, "but I suppose to any one who really

did believe in them, it would perhaps be rather an uncomfortable house to live in. Do have another sandwich, Lord Wopsley. You've such a long drive before you."

"Yes, we have indeed," said Lady Wopsley, getting up rather hurriedly. "I am afraid we ought to be going almost at once, Samuel. I'm *so* sorry, dearest Caroline, but I think perhaps we ought to go now. It's such a long run up to town. Good-bye, and thank you *so* much for everything."

"And you will write?" said Mrs Bellows, rising with grace to take farewell of her guests. "That is very nice. And if by any sad chance you do change your minds about the house, don't forget that Mr Chealey of Cheltenham is by far the best agent to go to. He could find you *any* kind of Cotswold house, and we should be so pleased if you employed him. He's so conscientious and honest. Quite a unique little thing among house-agents, and almost a personal friend of our own."

When the General, still with the stern and silent courtesy in which he had punctiliously carried out his duties as host all the afternoon, had finally seen the Wopsleys off the premises and shut the front door upon them, he returned to the oak parlour and stood before the fire.

"Do you mean to say," he said, "that that woman really *believes* in ghosts?—believes in them so much that she would

actually be afraid to come here?"

"I don't know what Lady Wopsley of Wick believes in," said Mrs Bellows in her detached and placid voice. "I know what Agatha Topp used to believe."

"Good God!" said the General meditatively. He added after a moment, "If she's really ass enough for that, she wouldn't stay in the house even if she *could* take it. She'd swallow every story she'd be stuffed with, and leave in a month. So *those* people needn't be on our conscience, anyway," said the General, pushing them off his with determination.

"None of them is on mine," said Mrs Bellows with the serenity of one who has no need to push anything. "Nor ever has been. Shall we go for a turn in the park before dinner, Herbert dear?"

The gist of the subsequent outpouring of Lady Wopsley of Wick, whose tact was of a quality to be expected in Agatha Topp, may be more or less briefly repeated.

"Samuel and I feel more *ardently* remorseful than we can say, dearest Caroline. We can only *beg* you to forgive us. We realise how *terribly* disappointed you will be after we had raised your hopes so high. But we are afraid we should *never* be able to persuade our servants to stay, dear. Of course, to educated people like you and I, the whole thing is merely *nonsense*, but

the lower classes are so *terribly* superstitious. Your own servants have been with you so long that I expect they have got accustomed to living with ghosts, but really smart London servants are so different, aren't they? They would *never* put up with them, and Samuel and I are afraid we should have *endless* trouble. But we felt that the *least* we could do after disappointing you so greatly was to employ the agent you asked us to, and we were *so* anxious to please you about it, dearest Caroline, that we actually went *straight* to Cheltenham from your house and saw him! We liked him *so* much. I thought him a perfect little pet, and Samuel was so pleased with his funny old-fashioned modest manners. He says he is *sure* he can find a house for us. But we feel *so* apologetic, dearest Caroline," &c., &c.

"The lower classes are so terribly superstitious," said Mrs Bellows benignly.

And a day or two later the following advertisement appeared in all the county newspapers:—

"MR CHEALEY of Cheltenham has been commissioned by his client, Lord Wopsley of Wick, to state that Lord Wopsley desires to lease or buy a commodious residence in the Cotswolds, preferably modern, suitable for a hunting-box. All further particulars of requirements to be obtained from Mr Chealey, 3 Billikin Street."

On the afternoon of the day after that advertisement appeared, a little figure came

trudging along the Cotswold lanes, and turned into the King's Lodge gates, after a brief pause by the high hedges outside them for a hurried removal of the last speck of dust from a suit the nap of which was not on end. King's Lodge lay quiet and grey between its golden beeches as the little son of a generation broken by an anguish and knowledge never dreamed of by even the stormiest of the generations that have vanished since the building of those weathered walls, came up the long drive and past the playing fountain and paused again an instant to listen to the singing voice of the water.

"When I think what I was feeling the last time I heard that!" said Mr Chealey to himself. Tears were in his eyes, but they were not tears of misery and exhaustion.

He was coming to bring news so great that it could never have been conveyed in a letter. When it came to the point he found himself unable to convey it even in words. Once more Mr Chealey broke down in the old hall of King's Lodge, but this time it was not because of a terror that unmanned him—it was because of a gratitude that overwhelmed him. On the appearance of the advertisement commissioned by Lord Wopsley of Wick, one of the oldest and best-known of those house and estate agencies in Cheltenham which had manifested their dislike of a new man trying to make

a beginning amongst them, had come hurriedly to the conclusion that a new man who appeared to be making so striking a beginning whether they disliked it or not, had better have something else manifested to him. It was their turn to approach Mr Chealey—not perhaps in quite so humble and faint a manner as Mr Chealey had once approached them, but still with considerable urgency and most gratifying politeness. They said it would give them the sincerest pleasure if Mr Chealey, bringing the goodwill of his numerous and distinguished clients with him, would consent to enter their firm in a permanent capacity on the most excellent and advantageous terms to himself.

Tears were streaming down Mr Chealey's face as he incoherently told his news—tears of such thankfulness and gratitude that they could scarcely be distinguished from the smiles with which they were mingled. He was safe. He had been pulled out of the sucking quicksands for good and all, and set upon his feet. He was not to be allowed to suffer for having left his little office stool to suffer to the best of his ability for what had almost appeared to him to be his duty in 1914. He was not to add one more to the millions who, at this most sorrowful moment of the world's existence, sit fast bound in misery and iron, and find no help or hope from man.

"And me that thought that

no one cared!" sobbed Mr Chealey.

The King's Lodge car took him back to Lorton Station after tea; and with him, on a slip of paper similar to those which had been reaching Billiken Street from time to time during the recent events, he bore a little statement to be used in case of need or further inquiries: "Mr Chealey is directed to announce that the residence of King's Lodge is remaining in its present owner's hands." Its present owner stood a moment under the King's Lodge portico watching the lights of his car travelling down the drive and turning with a flash out of the gates. The smooth whirl of its journeying died farther and farther into the distance till it ceased altogether. The fresh still darkness of the autumn night arched over the quiet Cotswold country, and the beautiful cry of the great white owl who lived in an old elm in the deer-park rose beyond the beeches as he floated past them.

"Well, that's a good thing done!" said the General. He shut the doors and went back to the tea-table in front of the log-fire that blazed on the hearth of the hall. Mrs Bellows, her charming head resting comfortably against the cushions of her arm-chair, was sitting in reposeful ease watching the flames, and the General dropped into a chair on the opposite side of the hearth and took out his cigarette-case.

"That's a good thing done, Caroline!" he repeated with satisfaction. "And a thing well worth the doing. There's *one* ex-soldier off the roads anyway!"

"And I'm so glad we did it the way we did it, dear," murmured Mrs Bellows in her serene reflective voice.

"What?" said the General, pausing with his match-box in his hand. "*Glad* we did it the way we did it! Then I must strongly disagree with you, Caroline! The only thing I hesitated over for a moment was the doing of it in the way we had to do it! And Chealey hesitated about it too, and it did him credit. For anything less than the thing we did it for I wouldn't have done it at all. But if the same circumstances arose again, I'd do exactly the same thing again—to-morrow."

Mrs Bellows said nothing. She watched in indolent silence the flames springing, in gold and rose, like the colour of the beeches, from the piled beech-logs under the great stone canopy of the hearth.

"And I'm especially pleased," resumed the General, proceeding to extract a match from his match-box, "that it's happened to be such a decent little chap as Chealey that we've managed to help. I'd have helped him anyhow, of course, but it's been a real pleasure to play the Good Samaritan to so right-minded a little fellow as Chealey."

"And if we hadn't done it

the way we did it," said Mrs Bellowes' idle soft voice, "we could never have made the Levites cross the road and do it too."

The General's match paused in mid-air. He gazed at his wife in blank astonishment.

"Never have made the Levites cross the road and do it too!" he repeated. "Good God, Caroline, what on *earth* are you talking about?"

"Well, not *only* the Levites, of course," said Mrs Bellowes with reflective grace; "they practically *all* came trundling over—even the house-agents who first went by on the other side. I don't think any of them really got past altogether, except perhaps the one that wept in the drive."

The General slowly laid his unstruck match down on the table near him. He sat in silence, gazing at his wife. His mind was absorbedly travelling back over two lines at once—the half-forgotten details of the story of the Good Samaritan, and the long procession of Mr Chealey's orders-to-view. Back it went—from Mr Samuel Solomons to the Priests of nature and the stout Surbitites, who, as they were

so anxious to assure everybody, had miraculously made an immense fortune in the war without profiteering once.

"I think it's so nice that we've been able to bring a *few* of them over at any rate," went on Mrs Bellowes' leisurely lazy accents. "It amused me so very much to see them trundling across. Not that they quite knew what they were doing, of course," she added, her faintly-amused eyes still watching the splendid flames of the beech-logs. "They thought, poor dears, that they were merely travelling here comfortably along their own side of the road to take a charming house for themselves to live in—a house that they wouldn't have been able to take at all if we hadn't won the war. But all they were really doing was to cross the road to help a little ex-soldier on to his feet again out of the ditch."

The General sat a moment longer looking at Mrs Bellowes. Then a grim smile slowly spread over his countenance. He picked up the match again, lit his cigarette, and sat smoking and surveying the fire.

EVELYNE BUXTON.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

EGYPT—MARCH-APRIL 1919.

EARLY in March 1919 the Egyptian Nationalists decided that the time was ripe to drive the British from the valley of the Nile. The staple food-stuffs of the poor were at famine prices, and Nationalist propaganda that the British were the cause of this spread like wildfire from Alexandria to Assiut.

The British were demobilising; aeroplanes were in packing-cases ready for shipment to the Caucasus; the last of the Australian cavalymen with their saddlery were on transports in the canal, and their horses were being auctioned on the shore; and the fleet of the Inland Water Transport was immobile along the banks of the Nile. This, indeed, was the moment for action—the last of the British Expeditionary Force was withdrawing of its own accord; the patriots of Egypt would, by forcible suggestion, see to it that the remaining British, bag and baggage, followed suit. They were

just a little previous, however: ignorant and half-fed peasants were persuaded to commit a series of atrocities; isolated Englishmen were murdered; and a leave party of unarmed British troops had their throats cut at Assiut, and their blood drunk by a crowd of the city scum, already mad with arak. Rails were torn up and telegraph-wires cut, but the wireless flashed its messages. The aeroplanes were unpacked, the cavalry disembarked, and the personnel from the Royal Navy at Alexandria started up the engines of the Inland Water Transport.

Thus a repetition of the wholesale horrors of the Indian Mutiny was arrested; but complete control was never established, the Alexandrian mob was never cowed, and the attacks on isolated Englishmen never ceased. Never, never were the minds of men who cared for the good name of England so tortured as during those days.

II.

Bland was in the police; he was stationed in Cairo, and his life during those days was, to put it mildly, "hell." Between his office at the police headquarters, the liaison room

at Army Headquarters in the Savoy, the morning conferences, the afternoon conferences, the evening and midnight conferences, the rush to get into full uniform to be present at an

important function where the chances were more than even that he would receive a bullet between the shoulders, the hurried lunch at the Turf Club, interrupted by a message that an important funeral had been mistaken for an illegal procession by an Australian patrol and dispersed, not without a few broken heads amongst the mourners, the twenty-four hours did not allow of ten minutes' relaxation. Added to this was the ever-present fear that at any hour his men might quietly—it would all be done in good order—fold up their uniforms, place their side-arms on the pegs in their rooms, march away, and disappear among the Cairene crowd. The Egyptian officer cadets had done it thus, leaving a respectful letter to their beloved Irish Commandant, Herbert Pasha; and detachments of Egyptian troops, under orders for the Upper Nile, had refused to embark. How long would the police force respond to their chief's appeal to do their duty and leave the question of politics to others?

There was one part of Bland's work—to him perhaps the most important—which was carried out only with some difficulty—the organisation of his secret agents.

The best of these—Greeks, Armenians, and Egyptians themselves—dealt only direct with Bland. They would not trust themselves to risk blackmail on the part of the personnel of the police, and arrangements had therefore to

be made to meet these individuals under circumstances which would in no way compromise them.

The flats of Bland's friends were as often as not convenient meeting-places, and this afternoon, between five and seven o'clock, my flat in the Sharia Suliman Pasha was to be such a rendezvous.

At a quarter to five Bland arrived. He was in flannels, and his face and manner showed traces of the past three weeks. He gulped down some tea which I had ready for him, lighted a cigarette, and then, wondering which of his men would turn up during the next hour, we went out on to the balcony overlooking the street, almost opposite the Mohammed Ali Club.

As we came out on the balcony a closed Daimler car pulled up, and a slight elderly man with white hair got out and entered the club.

"There," said Bland, "goes the one of all the British in this country for whom the Egyptians have the slightest real regard. You will seldom meet him except *en intime*, or occasionally, perhaps, at the Residency. He is growing old—more's the pity for England—and spends most of his time among his birds and flowers at Matarieh.

"For him and his daughter prince and fellah would do anything; they ask his advice, they tell him their troubles. From the disposal of a coffee-pot which belonged to the

village postman's grandmother, who died suddenly, to advising Abba II. as to the best way out of his difficulties with the Consul-General—all, great and small, have come to him; and why? Because he takes an unselfish interest, his time is theirs; he knows their language, thoughts, and customs."

And then Bland fell to musing on the chances England was missing in the East.

"At present," he said, "there is no place except at Matariéh where England can get into touch with the pulse of this country. That you can deal with realities and do great things in offices, at official council meetings, and by issuing proclamations, is impossible in the East. The French realise this, the Italians realise this—but the English never. The British advisers, the Commander-in-Chief, even the High Commissioner himself, what can they do? They can issue orders, use force, and carry out the routine of their offices, but as for inspiring any feeling except that of bitterness—they cannot do it. And the British officials, what are their lives? Office routine, home on a bicycle, and then the Gezireh Club. The best class of Egyptian sees nothing admirable in this. 'Office routine,' he says, 'is the life of a clerk; nobody would ride a bicycle who was worth anything better; and as for playing games of ball with his women-folk at Gezireh—well! a life for children—not for serious men of affairs.'

Should an Egyptian be granted an interview with a British official, it is an experience much like travelling in the London tube. He is hustled in and hurried out, and the whole time there is an atmosphere of 'be careful to get out at once when the car stops.' This won't do in the East. Coffee and cigarettes and an atmosphere of pleasant companionship—this is when the Eastern mind will unbosom itself. In the French and Italian Agencies this is realised—the Pasha is received as he expects to be. Young Italians and Frenchmen, with little behind them except money, manners, and attractive wives, play this part for their country if they can do nothing else. Whom do you meet in the palaces in Cairo and up the Nile, on Pashas' house-boats or dining at the Khedivial—Italians, French, and Greeks, but these days never an Englishman. And the Egyptian princes are not mean creatures; most of them are proud of their Turkish and Circassian blood. And whom do we let them meet? Penniless British officials, who are unable to return suitably any hospitality they may receive, or the racing touts and trainers of Zeitoun and Alexandria. Why was Cromer protected on his departure by troops armed with ball cartridges, and why was Kitchener the best-loved man in Egypt after six months as Consul-General? The former never forgot that he was a hard-

headed business man, while the latter, without losing the best traits of the English character, became part of the East.

"Kitchener may have shocked British officialdom by his methods of acquiring blue china, but within four months he had made friends for England where before there had been nothing but bitterness and contempt."

Further soliloquy was suddenly interrupted by the opening of the door, and the entrance of one Roupin, an Armenian, whose face showed traces of excitement.

"This is a wonderful world," he said—"most wonderful. I have seen a thing to-day which is only possible once—never again."

He sat down, and without waiting for encouragement started off:—

"You know that yesterday there were rumours that crowds would assemble at Matarieh and Zeitoun, and then march on Cairo to sack the Armenian quarter, and that English troops with armoured cars were sent to form a protecting cordon. Well, last night I went out to Zeitoun and waited, taking many cups of coffee and cigarettes in the café by the station. Sure enough something was astir. Three parties of effendis in motors kept meeting near the station and then driving off in different directions. There seemed to be a large number of low persons of the type of carriers and carters about the streets, and these would assemble in knots and then slouch

off again. I went on to Matarieh and found the same there. As a feeler I asked a station porter at what time the true believers were to assemble, and at once he answered me: 'At sunrise to-morrow, praise Allah! for the effendis have not shown the liberality they promised when they persuaded the poor man to leave his work; but there will be riches enough for all,' he added, 'when the houses of the infidel are entered.' With that the porter sauntered off. So," said Roupin, "I walked to the town and stayed the night with some of my people. They also had heard the rumours of trouble, and believed that the carpenters and firewood-sellers had been busy preparing clubs, which were stored in their yards ready for distribution.

"I suggested warning the police and troops, but my friends pleaded with me not to do this, as their Moslem neighbours would know whence the information had come, and they would be marked down, whereas if nothing were said they were likely to go uninjured. Ah," said Roupin, "it has been ever thus with my father's people. The individual, thinking to secure himself, will allow hundreds of his fellow-Armenians to be massacred; and he only regrets when he finds that his efforts to save himself have been of no avail, and he too is led off to be slaughtered. No co-operation, no loyalty to each other or to their friends.

How many times have the Moslems not played on this? I listened to their pleading and said nothing.

"I was out before sunrise this morning, and soon the whole place was astir with men hurrying towards the open place in front of the Mosque. Matarieh is only small, but there must have been fully two thousand men, mostly armed, as my friends had warned me. The crowd kept increasing in numbers, but there was no movement—evidently a leader was expected. Students there were in numbers from the El Azhar, who were doing their best to inflame the minds of the ignorant. The Egyptian, Turkish, French, and Italian flags were distributed, and a number of low-class Italians were among the crowd. The latter, who were going about arm-in-arm with some Egyptian students just home from Italy, were laughing and taunting the crowd with having the British as their masters. Suddenly there was silence, and I felt myself pinned in, and being carried forward in a most helpless manner.

"A moment later I was able to look round, and there, not thirty yards from me, in the centre of the crowd, laughing and talking to those on either side, was an Englishwoman, riding a white Arab pony, and followed by a Soudanese orderly. I could not believe my senses, but it was true enough. There she was in a long white riding-

coat, with a white sun-hat. 'You are making merry this day, my friend,' I heard her say in Arabic to a burly *hammal*. 'Ya sitt,' he replied in a sheepish way; 'it is the truth.' 'If these are happy hours,' she said to another, 'tell me where you go and what you intend, so that I may join you. Where are your leaders?' 'It is but a procession,' replied the man. 'Good, very good!' laughed the lady; 'we English like processions—I will join you.' Wherever a knot of men assembled there she went. 'Oh, Yussuf Effendi—to a telegraph clerk—and what is this you are doing without telling an old friend like me?' 'Oh, lady,' he replied, 'this is no place for you. To-day the people are filled with thoughts of their wrongs, and are not responsible. They now only await orders from the Capital.' 'They come! they come!' cried the crowd; and all eyes were turned to a motor which arrived with three young effendis. The white pony, with its rider, was at the car before its occupants could descend. 'And who are you that you come to the people of Matarieh, and what message bring you? These people are my friends, and to-day I would share their joys and sorrows. Tell me, I pray, what message you bring, or go back whence you came!' Then addressing the crowd she asked, 'Tell me, friends, are these the leaders for whom you wait, these boys with hands like

women; are these the men who would lead you to deeds which would find favour in the sight of God ?'

"There were murmurs among the crowd, and here and there a jeer directed at the occupants of the motor-car. The lady in white knew the crowd. 'Oh, men of Matarieh, is it your wish that these strangers stay with us? You know me, and I know you, and I tell you they are impostors. Let them know your wish.' 'Go,' shouted the crowd—'go whence you came. Find fools elsewhere to follow you, but not in Matarieh.' The effendis were embarrassed; they tried to descend, but a restive Arab pony on one side and a surging crowd on the other made this an impossible undertaking. One attempted to make an address, and some of their supporters tried to reach them. But the crowd had found its true leader. 'They are impostors,' it roared. 'The truth is with the *Sitt*. Go back, you sons of dogs, and show not again your faces in Matarieh.' The effendis saw that they had lost the day—it was a new experience being taken to task in front of the crowd, whom they had previously held so easily with a few extravagant promises. They knew that they were beaten, and they drove off, followed by jeers and curses. 'And now, friends,' said the lady, 'I will send and ask our friend the English General at Zeitoun to spend the day with us, and I would ask my aged father

too, but that he had matters of importance that call him elsewhere.' Scribbling a line on a card, she called her Soudanese orderly. 'Oh, Mahmond,' she said, 'take this to the Liwa at Zeitoun, and tell him we await his arrival in the square by the mosque.'

"The orderly galloped off, and I expected to see the crowd disperse; but no—the lady in white rode among them, addressing most as old friends. 'We will meet the Liwa,' she said, 'and show him how the people of Matarieh can enjoy a day while the rest of the world grumbles like a scolding wife. Bring your flags around me, and make haste, so that we may be ready when His Excellency arrives.' The crowd surged as near as it dared to the heels of the lady's white pony. Another note was written. 'Oh, Sadik!' she called to a boy, 'make haste with this note to the lady who lives with me in my father's house, and bring me quickly that which she will hand thee.' Then the crowd were marshalled, not a word of remonstrance, but willingness to do all they were asked. 'By Allah, she is the mistress of all that is magnificent; may God protect her,' said admiring voices among the crowd. Those of the crowd who carried flags were spaced apart, and around each was gathered a part of the remainder, so that each with a flag became the leader of a group. The square was filled to overflowing, and the side

streets were surging with an eager crowd. The lady and the white pony were everywhere. On her approach labourers and carters did their best to assume what in their opinion was a military attitude; some attempted a salute, while the flagmen called on their followers to be silent. 'Silence, sons of all that is vile; listen and obey.' The boy who had been sent to the lady's home soon returned with a parcel, which proved to be an English flag. This was quickly attached to a suitable pole, from which a Turkish banner was hurriedly torn, and, carried by a *hammal* of huge proportions, was to be seen above the crowd wherever the lady might be. The standard-bearer, elevated among the heroes by the task confided to him, brushed aside all and sundry, with praises of the *sitt*, and curses on his fellows of present, past, and future generations. 'We will now move out to meet His Excellency. Oh, Zaid effendi, lead on your party along the road to Zeitoun, and you, oh Hasan, follow; and you and you,' naming the leaders of the different parties. The lady herself then moved on ahead with her standard-bearer, and the square emptied itself, the people following in orderly parties and with a dignified silence.

"Well clear of the town and past the palace of the great Prince Yousef Kamil, the crowd was again marshalled in line, just in time to receive the

British General who arrived in answer to the lady's message. The lady rode up and down the line. 'Oh, men of Matarieh, when His Excellency arrives show your pleasure, and welcome him.' Final instructions were given, and as the General reached this parade, flags were waved, and cries of 'Welcome' and 'May Allah bless Your Excellency' burst from a thousand lusty throats. Then there was an inspection and certain individuals were called by name and introduced to the General. Again the lady addressed the crowd, saying, 'It is His Excellency's wish that we go out into the desert, far from the town, and that there the strong and fleet among you show their prowess. Those who surpass their fellows will be rewarded from His Excellency's munificence.' This was greeted with shouts of joy, and this crowd, only a few hours before thirsting for the blood of the infidel, was quickly formed into a column, and, led by a British General and the lady on the white pony, started off across the desert towards the sand-hills.

"A mile away a largish hollow in the ground formed a promising arena, and there the column halted. Already the fat ones and sleek among those who formed the column were beginning to tail off, but they soon caught up and squatted around the outer edge of the hollow; while those who wished to compete in wrestling and sword-stick were being

paired off by a hastily improvised committee. The play waxed fast and furious. Among the crowd were strangers to Matarieh, and these and their backers brought the necessary zest into the competitions. The flag-poles formed excellent single-sticks, and many were the bruised heads and shoulders. Then there were races,—a celebrated runner from the Fayoun was there. He had won the race and completed the course a second time before the best local runner had even neared the winning-post. Then had he dashed to where the lady was standing and flung himself at her feet, where he remained until she bade him rise with the words, ‘Oh, Master of Speed! arise and tell me thy wish.’ ‘Oh, lady,’ he said, ‘it is that I should be a slave in thy father’s house.’

“The games were over, the jeers against the vanquished had subsided, and those who had won had been rewarded from the General’s liberality. The flagmen again took their posts as directed by the lady, and again the column was on the march, making a detour which brought them back to the town of Matarieh from the north-east. As the outskirts were passed there were many who fell out by the roadside, asking for water in the name of God. The fat and the sleek stretched themselves under the nearest shade trees, and among

them the vendors of sherbet and water did well. But there was still a goodly number who arrived back at the square in front of the mosque. Again the crowd was marshalled, again the flagmen lined up in front. ‘Oh, my friends,’ said the lady in white, ‘before we go to our homes we must thank His Excellency for having shared our joys with us this day. Evil-disposed persons have spoken evil in His Excellency’s ears regarding the people of Matarieh, but now with his own eyes he has seen and with his own ears he has heard, and now he knows where lies the truth.’ ‘It is the truth,’ shouted the crowd; ‘the truth is with the *sitt*. Curses on the heads of evil-doers; may their souls perish.’ With the waving of flags and shouts of ‘Excellency’ and ‘*Es sitt*’ the crowd dispersed, some few rushing up to touch the edge of the lady’s coat with their lips.”

The Armenian Roupin had continued this uninterrupted. He finished up breathless, saying, “This wonderful thing you will not believe; but, sirs, I assure you I have seen it with my own eyes.”

“I do believe it,” said Bland. “I can believe every word of it.” Turning to me he said, “The lady on the white pony is the daughter of the old gentleman we saw entering the club about an hour ago.”

HASTA.

VAGABOND IMPRESSIONS.

ROUSSEAU AND BOSWELL.

BY ST JOHN LUCAS.

THE discovery of any documents which throw new light on the meeting between one of the most tragic and one of the most comic figures in eighteenth-century literature should be a matter of rejoicing for all lovers of letters. In his will the great Boswell appointed Sir William Forbes, Bart., the Reverend Mr Temple, and Edmond Malone, Esquire, as his literary executors; but these wicked men never met. Boswell's manuscripts were handed over to his family, and were apparently all destroyed, with the exception of the so-called 'Commonplace Book' (published in 1874), and another note-book containing journals used in writing the 'Life of Johnson.' In a volume called 'Young Boswell,' published a month or two ago, Mr Chauncey B. Tinker of Yale gives extracts from the note-book which afford an interesting picture of Boswell's methods; he quotes also from some unpublished letters which the prince of interviewers wrote to Jean-Jacques at the end of 1764. Mr Tinker remarks that the period 1764-1765 has hitherto been almost a blank page in Boswell's history. As a matter of fact, the story of the visit to Motiers is given in fairly

full detail by Lord Morley in the second volume of his classic 'Rousseau.' But Boswell's self-introductory letter is new and wonderful.

It was in July 1762 that Rousseau came to Motiers, in the principality of Neuchâtel, after his expulsion from Bernese territory by a decree of its Government, which, like the Council of Geneva, disapproved of 'Emile' and the 'Contrat Social.' Neuchâtel was part of the dominions of that sagacious monarch, Frederick, King of Prussia; the Governor of the principality was George Keith, Lord Marischal, then an old man (he had taken part in the Jacobite rising of 1715), a Scot of the highest character, and a faithful and generous friend to his illustrious and unfortunate guest. There seemed to be some prospect that Rousseau had at last found an abiding haven of refuge. Soon, however, there came to share it the woman who had been the evil genius of his life and the mother of his forsaken children.

By the time Boswell came to visit him all his best work had been written. The 'Nouvelle Héloïse' had appeared in 1761, the 'Contrat Social' and 'Emile' in 1762, the 'Lettres

de la Montagne' in 1763. He was near the height of his fame, and had already experienced many of the inconveniences derived from it. 'Emile' was burnt in Paris by the public executioner, and an order was issued for its author's arrest. Similar compliments were paid to the 'Lettres de la Montagne' in Paris (together with Voltaire's 'Dictionnaire Philosophique'), at the Hague, and at Geneva. Rousseau had exposed himself to the enmity of the philosophers and freethinkers as well as to the rancour of the orthodox. Christophe de Beaumont, by the divine compassion Archbishop of Paris, Duke of St Cloud, peer of France, Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost, had condescended to launch invectives against him in a manifesto eloquently described by Lord Morley as "one of those hateful documents in which bishops, Catholic and Protestant, have been wont for the last century and a half to hide with swollen bombastic phrase their dead and decomposing ideas." The persecution mania, not without a reason, had begun to cloud Rousseau's brain and to poison his mind.

But the period of his existence at Motiers was on the whole more peaceful than any other in his life except the years at Annecy with his "chère maman," Madame de Warens. He botanised, he spent long hours in lonely meditation, he received many

visitors—too many for his comfort,—he acquired the art of making pillow-lace, and was admitted to Communion by the local pastor. He walked the earth in Armenian costume, with a furred bonnet on his head. He corresponded with the great. Gibbon was then in Lausanne, where "time, absence, and the habit of a new life" were healing the wounds inflicted by his fruitless love affair with Mlle. de Curchod. "My cure was accelerated," writes Gibbon in his memoirs, "by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself"; but the report was perhaps not so faithful as he liked to imagine, for a Swiss pastor who knew the lady implied to Rousseau that Gibbon had behaved rather badly. "She has written me a letter," he concluded, "which made my heart ache"; and he asked Rousseau to intercede for her with Gibbon. Rousseau refused, adding sternly: "Le refroidissement de M. Gibbon me fait mal penser de lui; j'ai revu son livre (l'Essai sur l'étude de la Littérature). Il y court après l'esprit; il s'y guinde. M. Gibbon n'est pas mon homme; je ne puis croire qu'il soit celui de Mademoiselle Curchod. Qui ne sent pas son prix n'est pas digne d'elle; mais qui le peut sentir et s'en détache est un homme à mépriser" (Sainte-Beuve, 'Causeries du Lundi,' viii. 440). This is a characteristic example of Rousseau's capacity for esti-

mating sensibly the affairs of other persons whilst remaining perfectly demented with regard to his own. There is no record, I believe, that Gibbon visited him subsequently.

Boswell, when he went to Motiers, was twenty-four years old, and had already been—or imagined himself to have been—in love on several occasions. One of his recent adventures was an affair at Utrecht with a certain Mlle. Isabella de Zuylen, a sprightly and clever young woman with a talent for conic sections and for composing romantic analyses of her own character. Boswell, who had read and greatly admired the ‘*Nouvelle Héloïse*,’ was eager to consult the author of that famous and long-winded breviary of the passions—eager also, perhaps, to parade his own precocious experience. Lord Marischal seems to have warned Boswell not to intrude on Rousseau’s privacy, but, of course, Boswell was indomitable. On 3rd December 1764 he composed his magnificent letter of introduction.

“MONSIEUR,—I am a gentleman of an old Scots family. You know my rank. I am twenty-four years old. You know my age. It is sixteen months since I left Great Britain, completely insular, knowing hardly a word of French. I have been in Holland and Germany, but not yet in France. You will therefore excuse my language. I am on my travels, and have

a genuine desire to perfect myself. I have come here in the hope of seeing you. . . .

“I present myself, sir, as a man of unique merit, as a man with a sensitive heart, a spirit lively yet melancholy. Ah! if all I have suffered gives me no special merit in the eyes of M. Rousseau, why was I ever so created, and why did he ever write as he has done?

“Do you ask me for letters of recommendation? Is there need of any with a man like you? An introduction is necessary in the world of affairs, in order to protect those who have no insight for impostors. But, sir, can you, who have studied human nature, be deceived in a man’s character? My idea of you is this: aside from the unknowable essence of the human soul, you have a perfect knowledge of all the principles of body and mind; their actions, their sentiments, in short, of whatever they can accomplish or acquire in the way of influence over man. In spite of all this, sir, I dare to present myself before you. I dare to submit myself to the proof. In cities and courts where there is a numerous society, it is possible to disguise one’s self; it is possible even to dazzle the eyes of the greatest philosophers. But I put myself to the severest proof. It is in the silence and the solitude of your hallowed retreat that you shall judge of me: think you that in such circumstances I should be capable of dissimulation?

"Your writings, sir, have softened my heart, raised my spirits, and kindled my imagination. Believe me, you will be glad to see me. You know Scots pride. Sir, I come to you to make myself worthy to belong to a nation that has produced a Fletcher of Saltoun and an Earl Marischal. Pardon me, sir, but I am moved! I can no longer refrain myself. O beloved St Preux! Inspired Mentor! Eloquent and amiable Rousseau! I have a presentiment that a noble friendship is to be born this day. . . .

"I have much to say to you. Although but a young man, I have had a variety of experiences, with which you will be impressed. I am in serious and delicate circumstances, and am most ardently desirous of having the counsels of the author of '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*.' If you are the benevolent man that I think you, you will not hesitate to bestow them upon me. Open your door then, sir, to a man who dares to say that he deserves to enter there. Trust a unique foreigner. You will never repent it. . . ."

A unique foreigner indeed. Who, as Mr Tinker remarks, could refuse such a request? The interview took place, and Boswell seems to have induced Rousseau to talk by means of his usual method—that of propounding problems which he knew to be of interest to his victim, and of demanding advice upon them. Hypochon-

dria, love affairs, flute-playing, questions of honour—any of these subjects could be safely relied on to elicit the theories of one who was own child to melancholy, had been the lover of many women, was a mediocre musician, and a most pontifical teacher of conduct.

What Rousseau thought of his amazing visitor is not known, but he certainly received him with kindness. "*Il y a des points où nos âmes sont liés*," he observed, to Boswell's everlasting delight. In short, from the interviewer's standpoint, the meeting was a great success. The sage Lord Marischal, however, seems to have been fearful of its effects. "I only hope," he wrote to Rousseau, that he may not fall into the hands of people who will turn his head; he was very pleased with the reception you gave him."

Boswell seems to have managed to make a friend of Thérèse le Vasseur, Rousseau's "*gouvernante*," for he concludes one of his letters with the following remarkable allusion to her: "You will not take offence if I write occasionally to Mlle. Vasseur. I swear that I have no intention of carrying off your duenna. I sometimes form romantic plans, never impossible plans." Even Rousseau must have smiled at this; but a year later, when he went to England with David Hume, he allowed Boswell the privilege of escorting Thérèse across the Channel—an arrangement of which Hume did not

approve. "This young gentleman," he wrote, "very good-humoured, very agreeable, and very mad, has such a rage for literature that I dread some circumstance fatal to our friend's honour. You remember the story of Terentia, who was first married to Cicero, then to Sallust, and at last in her old age married a young nobleman, who imagined that she must possess some secret which would convey to him eloquence and genius." However, Boswell does not appear to have imitated the young nobleman.

The chief practical result of Boswell's wonderful letter was his expedition to Corsica. There had been insurrections against the Genoese rule in that island since 1729; in 1755 General Paoli defeated the Genoese, and drafted a scheme of government for his compatriots. Rousseau wrote in glowing terms of the scheme ('*Contrat Social*, ii. x.), and was invited by the Corsican leaders in 1764 to help them with his advice. He was flattered, and resolved to go and live in the island with Thérèse le Vasseur; meanwhile he gave Boswell a letter of introduction to Paoli, and exhorted him to visit Corsica. In 1765 Boswell went there, not without risk, and in the excellent '*Tour to Corsica*' he describes his meeting with Paoli.

"He asked me what were my commands for him. I presented him a letter from Count Rivarola, and when he

had read it, I showed him my letter from Rousseau. He was polite, but very reserved. I had stood in the presence of many a prince, but I never had such a trial as in the presence of Paoli. I have already said that he is a great physiognomist. In consequence of his being in perpetual danger from treachery and assassination, he has formed the habit of studiously observing every new face. For ten minutes we walked backwards and forwards through the room, hardly saying a word, while he looked at me with a steadfast, keen, and penetrating eye, as if he searched my very soul.

"This interview was for a while very severe upon me. I was much relieved when his reserve wore off, and he began to speak more. I then ventured to address him with this compliment to the Corsicans. 'Sir, I am upon my travels, and have lately visited Rome. I am come from seeing the ruins of one brave and free people; I now see the rise of another.' He received my compliment very graciously."

Paoli's description of the meeting (quoted by Mr Tinker from Fanny Burney's '*Diary*') gives an amusing picture of Boswell on the trail.

"He came to my country, and he fetched me some letter recommending him; but I was of the belief he might be an impostor or an espy; for I look away from him, and in a moment I look at him again and I behold his tablets. Oh!

he was to the work of writing down all I say! Indeed, I was angry. But soon I discover he was no impostor and no espy; and I only find I was myself the monster he had come to discern. Oh, he is a very good man; I love him indeed; so cheerful! so gay! so pleasant! but at the first, oh! I was indeed angry."

Boswell returned to Switzerland in 1765, and wrote his impressions to Rousseau. "You will forget all your cares for many an evening while I tell you what I have seen. I owe you the deepest obligation for sending me to Corsica. The voyage has done me marvellous good. It has made me feel as if all the lives of Plutarch had sunk into my soul. . . . I am devoted to the Corsicans heart and soul; if you, illustrious Rousseau, the philosopher whom they have chosen to help them by their lights to preserve and enjoy the liberty which they have acquired with so much heroism—if you have cooled towards these gallant islanders, why, then, I am sorry for you, that is all I can say."

But by this time Rousseau had lost interest in Corsica, for some one—possibly Voltaire—had spread the rumour that the invitation was a practical joke. France bought the island from Genoa—with memorable consequences, — and Paoli had to fly to England, where, in spite of Horace Walpole, who called him "an unheroic fugitive" and a "dirty

fellow," he found a happy place of exile. His warm reception was, no doubt, largely due to Boswell, and he was always grateful.

The relations between the great tragic and the great comic genius seem to cease soon after the Corsican episode. "I see he is now a little sick of Rousseau himself, but I hope it will not cure him of his anger to me," wrote Horace Walpole in 1768, referring to Boswell, whom he heartily disliked. Mr Tinker reproduces a caricature based on a drawing by Boswell, and dated 1776, which has the usual coarseness of the pictorial satire of the time. Rousseau, who had quarrelled with Hume, is depicted as a naked and bearded savage surrounded by apes; Hume is offering him some extraordinary object (possibly meant for a lying tongue) in a basket; and Voltaire, urged on by a hirsute personage, presumably Frederick of Prussia, is about to beat him with a cudgel. But Boswell, if he became tired of Rousseau, did not easily forget Corsica, and annoyed Johnson with his obsession. "Mind your own affairs," thundered the great man, "and leave the Corsicans to theirs; I wish you would empty your head of Corsica." As for Rousseau, his days of peace at Motiers ended in the autumn of 1765. Thérèse le Vasseur had always been a stupid woman, and she had now become bad-tempered and quarrelsome. It is probable

that her neighbours found her intolerable, and that, for reasons of her own (she liked to live in towns and hated the country) she encouraged Rousseau's persecution mania. The pastor of Motiers, M. de Montmollin, who had formerly been his admirer, and had admitted him to Communion, was influenced by the clergy of Neuchâtel, and informed his flock that Rousseau was an atheist, was Antichrist himself. Rousseau was suspected of poisoning a man who died of the colic. His eccentric costume was regarded as damning evidence of his wickedness. He was stoned and insulted. The climax came in an absurd scene described by him with immense gravity in the 'Confessions' and with wicked levity by Voltaire. This is Voltaire's account :—

"... Sa Majesté informée du désir ardent que M. Jean-Jacques Rousseau avait de communier, et sachant que, non seulement M. Rousseau croyait fermement tous les miracles, mais encore qu'il en avait fait à Venise, le mit sous sa sauvegarde royale, sauvegarde rarement efficace depuis que l'empereur Sigismond, ayant protégé Jean Hus le laissa rôti par le pieux concile de Constance. Notre gouvernement de Neuchâtel, plus sage, plus humain et plus respectueux que ce beau concile, se conforma pleinement à l'autorité du souveraine et rendit, le premier mai 1765, un arrêt par lequel il fut défendu de molester,

d'inquiéter, d'aggrédir, de fait ou de paroles, le sieur Rousseau, son vicaire savoyard, et son pupille Emile, lequel pupille était devenu un excellent menuisier fort utile à la communeauté de Motiers-Travers. M. de Montmollin, son diacre et quelques autres dévots, tinrent peu de compte des ordres du roi et de l'arrêt du conseil. . . . En consequence, on ameuta tous les petits garçons de la paroisse, qui, pour obéir à Dieu de préférence au roi, coururent après Rousseau, le huèrent et le sifflèrent à peu près de la manière qu'on pratique à Paris envers un auteur dont la pièce est tombée. Ils firent plus : à peine Rousseau fut-il rentré dans sa petite maison, la nuit du 6 au 7 septembre, à peine était-il couché avec sa servante, c'est à dire M. Rousseau dans son lit et sa servante dans le sien, que voilà une grêle de pierres qui tombe sur sa maison, comme il en tomba une sur les Amorrhéens devers Aialon, Gabaon et Bethoron, immédiatement avant que le soleil s'arrêtât ; on cassa toutes ses vitres et on enfonça ses deux portes ; il s'en fallût de peu qu'une de ces pierres atteignît à la tête M. Jean-Jacques, n'entamât le muscle temporel et l'orbiculaire, ne passât jusqu'au zygomatique et, en pressant le tissu médullaire du cerveau, n'envoyât le patient débiter des paradoxes dans l'autre monde, ce qui aurait été regardé comme un miracle évident par tous les prédicants."

Thus ingloriously ended the sojourn at Motiers. In January of the following year Rousseau went to England with Hume. He was fêted in London, and George III. wished to settle a pension on him. But the black clouds of malignant suspicion were heavy on his brain; Hume, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Walpole, he imagined, were all conspiring against him; Jean-Jacques, the friend and benefactor of the human race, was every man's enemy. The story

of his last ten years is the record of a soul that passes from darkness to darkness.

As for Boswell, the fashion of regarding him as a fool has long since died. He was a self-important coxcomb, but he was a man of genius in his own particular art, and he was a good friend. Perhaps not the least of his merits is that apparently he never quarrelled with the illustrious and sinister creator of Julie and Saint-Preux.

A CONSUL IN THE MAKING.

BY A. C. WRATISLAW, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E.

I.

THERE may be serious young men who deliberately adopt the career for which they, after due consideration, consider themselves most fitted, but I imagine that in the majority of instances chance or parental promptings point out the way, and the youth follows with cheerful optimism. In my own case the problem was solved by my father writing to one of the Civil Service Commissioners, who happened to have been at school with him, and asking him to send down details of any of the examinations for the public service which might appear suited to my age and acquirements; and from the fairly extensive bundle which arrived I selected that concerning Student Interpreters in the Levant, such being then the designation of embryo Consuls for the Turkish Empire and the Near East generally. Not that I had the remotest idea of the position, prospects, duties, or pleasures (if any) of a Consul, but the initial salary of £200 seemed affluence to a boy who had just left school, and whether my ultimate destination were Turkey or Timbuctoo mattered little to me, provided it was somewhere abroad.

My father remarked unkindly

(for he had other views for me) that the Roman Emperor Caligula had made his horse a Consul, so that there seemed nothing incongruous in even the baser quadruped to which he compared me aspiring to the office. So that was settled.

This was in the autumn of 1881, and it was not until May 1883 that a competitive examination was held for five appointments as Student Interpreter at Constantinople. The intervening time was spent partly in France, Italy, and Spain in the endeavour to acquire or perfect a knowledge of the languages of those countries. The subjects required of candidates were exclusively languages, with the exception of a little arithmetic—viz., English, French, and Latin, which were obligatory, and ancient Greek, Italian, German, and Spanish, optional; and in view of the difficult nature of the tongues to be acquired hereafter it was certainly wise to exact proof of linguistic capacity.

An additional subject of examination, reserved for successful candidates only, was "reading aloud." The *raison d'être* of this ordeal was something of a mystery. It may have been devised as a pitfall for the aitch-

less or the stammerer, but the more probable explanation is that the Civil Service Commissioners, in a spirit of self-assertion, desired to show that they were competent to conduct some part of an examination themselves, and the choice of subject being limited by their acquirements, had necessarily to fall back upon reading aloud. At any rate, I had to read a portion of one of Macaulay's Essays in the presence of the three old gentlemen, who listened with rapt attention and expressed courtly gratitude on the conclusion of the performance. There is no instance on record of failure to pass in this subject, neither did it figure in the programme of any other Civil Service Examination so far as I know.

A last fence remained in the shape of a medical examination. When this was successfully negotiated, the five successful candidates were supplied by the Foreign Office with tickets *viâ* Marseilles, and directed to proceed to Constantinople. At this time there was no through railway communication to Turkey, the only alternative route being to go by train to Roumania, cross the Danube to Rustchuk, and thence to Varna, finishing the journey by sea.

Early in July we arrived in Constantinople, and took up our abode in the village of Ortakeuy, on the European side of the Bosphorus, about three miles from Galata. Here a partially-furnished house was provided for us, a commodious

enough residence on the side of a hill, with large rooms and plenty of them, and a tennis-court at the back; and in this village, but not, alas! in the same house, we passed two not unpleasant years.

The immediate mission in life of a Student Interpreter was to acquire the languages of the country. The Foreign Office provided masters, and the staff consisted of Costaki Bey Panjiri for Turkish, Habib Effendi for Arabic and Persian, and Mr Maleakas for Greek. All were curiosities in their way. Panjiri called himself an Albanian, but was in fact a Greek. An excellent Turkish scholar, and knowing English almost perfectly, he would have been an ideal teacher but for his phenomenal laziness. He much prided himself on being an honorary aide-de-camp to the Sultan, and affected to have accepted the position of Turkish teacher purely to oblige the Porte, which had been asked by the Embassy to designate one. The salary was quite a subordinate consideration. Habib, the ordinary type of an Oriental scholar, was willing enough to teach if his pupils desired to learn, but he much preferred conversation on ordinary subjects, and if possible, a game of chess. Maleakas was a master in the Turkish college of Galata Serai, and alone of the three took his instructional duties seriously. However, as Greek was rather a side-show, his energy was to some extent wasted. In times

of financial stress he was willing to approach a capitalist friend of his with a view to making pecuniary advances to an indigent student. The terms of this friend, whose name was of course Maleakas, were somewhat severe—namely, pounds sterling to be paid for a loan in Turkish pounds at the end of the current quarter when salaries were due. As the value of the Turkish pound was then eighteen shillings and twopence, and the period of the loan a month on the average, the rate of interest worked out at over 100 per cent, and it was only when other sources were unavailable that any one applied for help to our respected professor of Greek.

Neither Habib nor Maleakas knew English, so they had to make use of French as the medium of instruction.

These three formed the regular teaching staff, but we also twice a week attended the chambers in Galata of Mr (afterwards Sir Edwin) Pears, who had an extensive practice as a barrister in the British Supreme Consular Court and the Turkish Commercial Court. Mr Pears took an immense amount of trouble in preparing us for our future magisterial duties, and it would be difficult to overestimate the benefit we derived from his lectures.

Student Interpreters were nominally under the orders of the British Ambassador, but so exalted a functionary could not be expected to take any active share in their super-

vision. His duties in this respect were delegated to a member of the Embassy staff, usually the senior second secretary, who in 1883 was Mr Arthur Nicolson. The job was by no means an arduous one, and the pay (£300) nearly double the salary of a second secretary as it then was, so the post was rather sought after. Once obtained, its duties did not appear to weigh very heavily on the occupant.

The acquisition of a foreign language, particularly of an Oriental language, implies a certain amount of drudgery on the part both of teacher and taught, so it seemed good to Panjiri to leave the spade-work to Habib Effendi, arguing that as the Turkish and Arabic characters were the same, we might just as well learn these and other elements from his colleague as from himself. He therefore did not put in an appearance in his professorial capacity until we had been in Constantinople a couple of months. Then, I must confess, his teaching was admirable. Turkish grammar is simple enough, and there is little difficulty in gaining a working knowledge of the language as spoken by the uneducated, who form at least ninety per cent of the population. But when it comes to the written, and particularly the official tongue, matters are vastly different. One constantly meets half a page or more in which there is only one finite verb, and that right at the

end, the rest being composed of subordinate sentences dovetailed into one another by means of gerunds and participles like the pieces of a child's puzzle. Translation at sight is a matter of great difficulty, and the whole has to be read over before the general drift can be understood. Furthermore, the poverty of the vocabulary of the primitive language, especially in abstract words, is compensated by borrowing *ad libitum* from Arabic and Persian, a plagiarism which is not confined to single words but includes whole phrases. I should say that Turkish is far the most difficult language spoken in Europe.

However, with no excessive amount of application, one was able when the first year's examination came round to translate with the help of a dictionary almost anything which appeared in the Turkish newspapers, to write after a fashion, and to decipher manuscript if plainly written.

Living was comparatively cheap. A man-servant's wages came to two or three pounds a month. A horse could be hired for half a day for twenty piastres, three shillings and fourpence. Five piastres at a restaurant would give you a dozen oysters with bread and butter, and a chance of typhoid thrown in. What did cost money was locomotion, and as the members of the British community, when not living in Pera, were scattered about in villages along both sides

of the Bosphorus, miles away from one another, boat hire was a serious item for any one with the social instinct at all developed.

The amusements which Constantinople afforded were of a simple character. Cricket, tennis, and boating provided exercise in the summer months, and in the winter riding, or football for those who liked it. No established cricket club existed, and nobody ever got any practice, but matches were of frequent occurrence, taking place either in a field at the "Sweet waters of Asia" or at Beicos, also on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, and nearly opposite Therapia, where the Embassy had its summer residence. The game was almost invariably Embassy *v.* the Rest, and was not so unequal as at first sight might appear, as the Embassy team included the staff of the Consulate, the Student Interpreters, the officers and crew of the gunboat stationed in the Bosphorus, and any traveller who might happen to be in Constantinople. There was a good deal of feeling over these matches, for the secretaries of the Embassy were supposed to give themselves airs, and were far from popular in consequence; and when, as usually happened, the Rest won the match, their triumph was unconcealed and sometimes almost offensive.

The Embassy at this time possessed two quite good batsmen in the persons of the Hon. Charles Hardinge and Edward

Goschen, but the rest of the side were not of much account. However, if the cricket was poor, these matches were great fun as picnics.

Only once in my time did Constantinople put a combined team into the field. This was in the summer of 1885, when the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Squadron visited Constantinople in order to pay his respects to the Sultan, and brought with him an eleven representing the Navy, which gave us a sound beating. Abdul Hamid, who was nothing if not hospitable, offered to bestow Turkish decorations on the victors, and when the proposed honour had to be respectfully declined, presented them instead with gifts of cigarettes and Turkish delight.

There were not many amusements other than those to be enjoyed in the open air. A theatre of sorts did exist at the Petit Champs in Pera, but it was only opened from time to time when a wandering French or Italian comic opera company drifted in, or, still more rarely, when a European star visited Constantinople in the hope of picking up a decoration from the Sultan. I remember amongst other curiosities a Greek company giving a representation of Hamlet, in which the actor who took the part of the gloomy Dane declaimed his part in English, while the rest of the troupe played up to him in Greek.

The chief night resorts were the Concordia and the Palais

de Cristal, two dingy music-halls in the Grand'rue de Pera. Here, nightly, waifs from the cafés chantants of Bucharest, Vienna, and Buda - Pesth screeched through their obsolete repertoires for the delectation of the gilded youth of Pera. The Concordia boasted a roulette-table, which was indeed its main attraction. The public playing of roulette and other games of chance was prohibited by Turkish law, and a gendarme was permanently stationed in the Concordia to see that the regulation in this respect was not infringed. This functionary, who was naturally taken into the pay of the establishment, stood outside the roulette room and made himself useful by opening the door for clients, and in case of need by aiding in the ejection of any unsuccessful gambler who might show himself obstreperous. Play was by no means high, but one soon tired of losing to the bank, the normal odds in whose favour were much increased by there being two zeros to twenty-four numbers instead of the usual one to thirty-six.

At the beginning of the winter of 1883-84 a great misfortune befell us, in that the lease of our house fell in and could not be renewed. By an unlucky coincidence Panjiri at the same time wished to vacate his own domicile in Ortakeuy, and persuaded Nicolson to take it for the Student Interpreters. A more deplorable choice could hardly have been made. It

was an aged wooden erection, lacking anything in the shape of a garden, shut in by equally undesirable residences to right and left, and giving on a mean lane. The one advantage lay in its situation on the Bosphorus, but this was largely neutralised by the fact that it overlooked a backwater in which any dead horse or dog floating down with the current would strive to break its journey to the Sea of Marmora. But the worst defect did not appear until we were actually installed, when every room was discovered to be infested with bugs. These faithful insects inhabit most of the houses in Constantinople, particularly those built of wood, but our home contained more than I have ever met elsewhere, nor could our utmost efforts eradicate the plague.

Not long afterwards Mr Nicolson left Constantinople, and his place as superintendent was taken by Mr Goschen.

Our first examination, as I have said, was held in the summer of 1884, after which Panjiri collapsed. I do not suppose that he looked us up more than twice a week on the average during the ensuing year, and as we had now passed the stage of lectures in common, such energy as he possessed proved quite unequal to the task of giving five separate lessons in the course of one morning. The consequence was that unless one lay in wait and captured him directly he reached the house,

the probabilities were against his being caught at all. Of course this slackness ought to have been reported, and our successors were so hard-hearted as to do so with excellent results. But we all liked Panjiri so much that the idea of complaining never occurred to us, and we met the situation by engaging auxiliary teachers at our own expense.

Some months before the final examination Mr Goschen made a practice of calling once a week to exercise us in interpreting. For this purpose he would write out a long and purely imaginary conversation on some current subject of controversy between the British Ambassador on the one side and the Sultan or his Grand Vizier on the other. He read out in English the Ambassador's utterances, which one of us translated into Turkish to the best of his ability for the benefit of Panjiri. The latter would give the reply in Turkish to be retranslated into English. Goschen used to let himself go in these conversations, naturally giving himself the best of the argument and treating the Commander of the Faithful to home truths which His Imperial Majesty was not likely to hear from an Ambassador.

One of these documents was somehow or other lost, and eventually fell into the hands of an intelligent Turk, who, taking the statements contained therein at their face value, imagined that he had obtained

possession of a confidential state paper of undoubted importance, and actually proposed to sell it back to the Embassy. I wonder if this previous adventure with "a scrap of paper" recurred to Sir Edward Goschen at the time of his historic interview with Herr von Bülow in August 1914.

After the examination, which all got through satisfactorily, we were ready, in the words of the regulations, to be appointed Assistants and attached to one of Her Majesty's Missions or Consulates in the Levant. Some little time elapsed before we were all told off for our respective posts. One by one my colleagues left for Cairo, Bourgas, Syria, and Morocco. It was not until October that I myself received marching orders for Salonica.

Salonica in 1885 was very different to the town with which our troops, to their sorrow, made acquaintance thirty years later. The artificial port had not even been projected, and ships lay at anchor in the roadstead or were moored stern on to the quay. The quay itself was narrow and ill-paved, and had not yet been built on through the greater part of its length. The White Tower was still surrounded by a wall, and served as a prison, while just outside it the old wall of the town ran from the sea up to Yedi Kuleh. There was no tram, no electric light, no gas even. The only railway line ran to Uscup, and the Monastir

railway, like the junction line to Constantinople, did not exist. The whole town lay within the walls, and a solitary villa or two represented the now populous and fashionable Kala Maria quarter. The commercial activities of the town were, however, greater than to-day, serving as it did as port and entrepôt for the whole of Macedonia and the greater part of Albania.

The population of the town was understood to be in the region of 120,000. No regular census has yet been taken in the Turkish Empire—not that Allah is understood to have the same objection to the numbering of the people which obsessed Jehovah, but, with the mixed population and vast and thinly-inhabited areas to be dealt with, the job would be more difficult and expensive for the limited resources of the administration than the result could warrant. The utmost ever done is to count the houses in a town or district and obtain an approximate estimate of the population by allowing an average number of occupants per house, generally five or six. The various non-Mussulman communities have a fairly accurate idea of their own numbers, which they are wont to halve for the purpose of estimating taxes and to double when it is a question of urging national claims.

Whatever the exact numbers may have been, there was no doubt as to the heterogeneous

character of the population of Salonica. The majority were Jews, descendants of refugees from Spain driven into exile by the persecutions of Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century. Their language is still Spanish, which they write in Hebrew characters. There were probably at this time about seventy thousand of them in the town, living unmolested under the protection of the unspeakable Turk. Next in numerical importance were the Turks, say twenty-five thousand. The Greeks could not have exceeded ten thousand, but they made up in self-assertion for their paucity of number.

Another considerable element was the Deunmehs, of whom there may have been eight or ten thousand. This interesting sect is composed of the descendants of Jews who two or three centuries ago conformed outwardly to Islam while, as is generally believed, remaining Jews at heart. Little, however, is known about their real tenets. They intermarry neither with Jews nor Turks, and remain quite apart from both.

The grand total was made up by a few nondescripts such as Albanians and Bulgarians, and two or three thousand foreign subjects.

Great Britain was worthily represented in this Babel by Mr John Blunt, who had resided there for the last ten years or so, first as Consul and then as Consul-General. His father had been Consul

there in years gone by, and he himself was born in Turkey, and had lived all his life in the country with the exception of a few years spent at school in England. He made his début in the public service as interpreter to Lord Lucan, commanding the British cavalry in the Crimea, and in that capacity had watched the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, an experience of which he was justly proud. In the whole course of my experience I have never met an Englishman who had more influence over the Turks than he. Knowing him to be their sincere well-wisher, and recognising his honesty and outspokenness, they always listened with respect to his frequent admonitions and usually followed his advice, with the result that during my two years' sojourn in Salonica the administration of the place was carried on without scandal and in as well-ordered a manner as could be expected in a bankrupt Oriental state.

Mrs Blunt was in her way as remarkable as her husband. Her father, too, had been a Consul in Turkey, and her brother, Sir Alfred Sandison, was then first Dragoman at the Embassy in Constantinople. Without knowing any language perfectly, she had a wonderful facility for speaking with tongues, and I have heard her maintain animated conversations in English, French, Italian, Turkish, and Greek with callers of these divers nationalities

who were in her drawing-room at the same time. A knowledge of five languages is nothing out of the way in the Levant, but I never met any one who could switch from one to another so easily and effectively as Mrs Blunt.

Contrary to her husband, who was a pronounced Turcophile, Mrs Blunt's sympathies were enlisted in favour of the Christian subject races, particularly the Greeks and Bulgarians. In their sometimes rather heated discussions each supported his or her thesis rather by pointing out the demerits of the other's protégés than by extolling the virtues of their own, perhaps because they felt that this was the safest ground to go on; and to my position as audience to these arguments, which were obviously inspired by intimate knowledge of the subject, I attribute a subsequent indisposition to regard either Turks or Christians with any considerable degree of respect.

Kinder people than the Blunts did not exist, and it was a great piece of good fortune for me that they allowed me to join their household. This arrangement suited all parties concerned. Mr Blunt, who did his work as and when the spirit moved him, had his Assistant ready to hand whenever he might happen to require him instead of during fixed office hours only. I obtained a most comfortable home instead of having to pig it in

unsatisfactory lodgings like my opposite numbers of the foreign consulates. And Mrs Blunt was well content to have some one in the house to whom she could prattle at will, who helped to entertain her numerous visitors, made a fourth at bridge, and acted generally as her aider and abettor.

Two Dragomans and two Cavasses completed the staff of the Consulate-General. The senior Dragoman was a Mr Bizzo. I never knew him do any work beyond making verbal reports of local gossip; but the other, Jovanovitch by name, was quite regular in attendance at the office, where he acted as shipping clerk when a British vessel visited the port. He also represented the Consulate in the Turkish courts when cases in which a British subject was interested came before them. Neither of these gentlemen was paid a salary; indeed it was rather an exception in those days for the Dragoman of a Consulate to receive remuneration. The protection he enjoyed in virtue of his position, which gave him and his family practically all the advantages of British or other foreign nationality, was as a rule sufficient attraction to any Christian Turkish subject to render the post eagerly sought after. It is more than probable that this situation was sometimes abused by honorary Consuls of minor states, and that the host of idle Dragomans with whom they sought to enhance their dignity

even paid something for the privilege.

The Cavass is an important member of a Consulate in Turkey. In ancient times Janissaries were assigned by the Porte for the personal protection of foreign Ambassadors and Consuls; but when, in 1826, Sultan Mahmoud II. got rid of this degenerate and turbulent Corps by the simple device of a simultaneous massacre of all its members throughout the Empire, foreign representatives had to provide guards of their own. Hence the Cavass, who, after being appointed by the Ambassador or Consul and recognised by the Turkish Government, passes during tenure of office under the protection of the State which employs him, is privileged to carry arms, and, until comparatively recent years, was exempted from military service. The number allowed is limited, four being the maximum for a Consulate-General, three for a Consulate, and two for a Vice-Consulate. Chosen almost invariably from the ranks of the Mussulman population, these men as a rule serve with exemplary fidelity, and may be trusted to an extent which would, sad to say, be dangerous in the case of a Christian.

At Salonica we had only two Cavasses. Hussein, the senior, was a shrewd middle-aged Turk of long experience, who was capable of running most of the ordinary work of the Consulate by himself. The other rejoiced in the name of

Abeddin, a young Albanian of phenomenal stupidity, who only kept his place because he was under the special protection of Mrs Blunt. Being a bachelor, he slept in the Consulate at night, and was supposed to guard it. Not that there was any need for such a precaution, for the last place a Salonica thief would venture to burgle was Mr Blunt's domicile.

Three days a week a professional scribe, remarkable only for the most appalling squint, called at the office to do any correspondence in Turkish which might be required. Presumably he had other clients, for he certainly did not make a living out of us.

The British community was a motley collection. The only members thereof who had been born in the British Isles were a Presbyterian minister and his wife, engaged in the uphill task of converting the Jews. I cannot say how many years they had been in Salonica on this mission without any material results to show, but they kept a school, and one hopes that their educational work was not thrown away. A few other Englishmen were members of British families long established in the Levant, some of them so long that they had joined the Orthodox Church and spoke Greek in preference to English. Then there were a fair sprinkling of Maltese, who are to be met with in every port of the Levant, and several families of Gibraltar Jews, indistinguishable, apart

from their British nationality, from the mass of Spanish Jews who formed the majority of the population. Beyond registering their birth when they entered this vale of tears and their death when they left it, marrying them when they demanded the rite of the Consul, issuing passports to such as had occasion to travel, and watching over the administration of estates, they afforded little work to the Consulate, and were generally a very respectable and law-abiding lot.

Even allowing for occasional bursts of activity, I do not suppose that my official duties engrossed more than a couple of hours per day on the average. There was not much doing in the political way beyond a scare on the Greek frontier, which occurred during the early winter of 1885, the routine work was scanty, and it must be acknowledged that the Salonica Consulate was not on the whole the best training-ground for a beginner who needed regular office hours and constant occupation to mould him into a useful bureaucratic type. Mr Blunt's system was unconventional. Like most men bred in the East, he was an early riser, and, winter or summer, would get up with the sun. He had usually done any work he had to do and was ready for his morning rounds before I was down for breakfast. Then every day, whatever the weather might be, he would sally forth to visit Turkish officials and other ac-

quaintances in the town in order to learn the latest news. Occasionally this routine would be varied by a tour in the bazaars to see that the local shopkeepers were not encroaching on the footways. I cannot imagine what originally led him to regard this duty as devolving on himself, but it had become his habit, with a municipal officer in his train, to drive away with invective and even blows any trader who ventured to place his wares where they impeded the free passage of pedestrians. Nobody seemed to regard this manifestation of public zeal as *ultra vires* in the case of Mr Blunt, who was indeed considered more as a local institution than a foreign representative.

By midday his peregrinations were over, and he returned to the Consulate, where I was ready to take down from his dictation and subsequently copy out any report on local affairs which he might have to make to the Ambassador at Constantinople or the Foreign Office. This contingency arose pretty frequently, as Mr Blunt took so intense an interest in everything occurring in his extensive district that few events seemed to him too trivial for record. His style was rather monotonous and his vocabulary limited, so before long he was able to substitute for the dictation a short statement of what he wanted to say, and trust me to write it out in exactly the words

he would have used himself. This shortened the operation considerably. After lunch it was his invariable habit to retire to bed for a couple of hours, and then to repair to the club, there to play bridge until dinner-time. Before 10 P.M. he was in bed and asleep.

This arrangement of my chief's day obviously left considerable leisure to his understudy. The afternoons were always free. Sometimes Mrs Blunt would carry me off, an unwilling victim, to pay a round of calls in her brougham, a vehicle of which she was extremely proud, as no other Consul's wife kept anything in the shape of a carriage. Once a week she was herself at home to visitors, when I was requisitioned to hand round the tea and make myself generally useful. If, as happened occasionally, Mussulman ladies, the women-folk of Turkish officials, announced their intention of paying a call, I was driven pitilessly out of the house, however earnestly I begged to be allowed to peep discreetly at the houris from a secure hiding-place. For the hours before dinner the club offered an asylum with bridge and billiards.

It was the exception for the Blunts to dine alone, and two or three people were sure to drop in most evenings with or without an invitation. Mrs Blunt was the soul of hospitality, and any one ready to make up a bridge-table after dinner was sure of a

welcome. Her husband could not be reckoned on as a partner, first because he, no doubt justly, despised our calibre as bridge-players; and secondly, on account of his early retirement to bed, a habit which he stoutly refused to abandon even when there was a formal dinner-party.

It is a peculiarity of society in Turkey that the ruling race remains entirely aloof. The exclusiveness of Turkish family life admitting none but near relatives to share in it, foreigners and Christians in general are restricted to more or less formal relations with their Turkish acquaintances, and it is of the rarest occurrence to be entertained in their houses. Christian ladies exchange calls with Turkish ladies, and Christian men with Turks; but it would imply the gravest breach of decorum for a man even to hint at the existence of the adult members of his harem when conversing with a Turk. Society in Salonica was thus confined to the foreign element, with a slight admixture of the more civilised native Christians and a still smaller contingent of Jews. The Consuls and their belongings constituted the aristocracy of the place, and any one on social terms at a Consulate was considered to be in the swim. It was not a very extensive swim nor a very lively one. An occasional dinner-party, a hop or two in the winter, and picnics in the summer were the sum of our gaieties, but sufficient to render

us quite satisfied with ourselves, and inclined to look down on other towns in Macedonia which were even duller than Salonica.

Intellectual diversions there were none, no theatres or concerts, not even a *café chantant*. I do not remember that the town boasted a bookseller's, certainly no shop which dealt exclusively in books. Sometimes a matron with marriageable daughters would invite the young people to an awful form of entertainment known as "*Jeux innocents*," which simply meant nursery games of the hunt-the-slipper type. Mrs Blunt once gave one of these orgies for my benefit, but I earnestly deprecated any repetition of the effort.

The great centre of reunion was the club. Everybody who was anybody belonged to it, and from four o'clock in the afternoon until dinner the rooms were thronged. Hardly any one went after dinner, as the streets were neither so clean nor so well lighted as to make a walk in the dark attractive. Mr Blunt, the founder of the institution, presided permanently over the Committee, and I must admit that in this, as in other capacities, he was inclined to be a little despotic. Only once was his supremacy challenged, when a new French Consul, misunderstanding the situation, incited his colony to propose him as Vice-President, with the ulterior object, as was well understood, of eventually ousting the President from

his position. Salonica fairly rocked with excitement while the crisis lasted, but the vast majority of the members rallied round Mr Blunt, and the dastardly intrigue was quashed.

One really serious drawback to Salonica was that there was no dentist in the place. Any one who required to have a tooth drawn had either to call in the piano-tuner, who added the art of extraction to his primary accomplishment, or he could apply to a French Sister of Charity. This pious lady possessed a fearsome instrument called a "*key*," and once it got a good grip on a patient and the screw was turned something had to give. Sometimes it was the tooth, sometimes the jaw-bone, but complete failure was unknown. I cannot be sufficiently thankful that I was never forced to have recourse to either practitioner.

At this time the shooting round Salonica was quite good, but it was considered dangerous to go out alone, even in the immediate vicinity of the town. The district had a very bad reputation for brigandage, and within the last five years two Englishmen had been carried off and held to ransom. To secure their life and liberty the British Government was compelled to pay £12,000 for one and rather more for the other; and though such captures were almost always the result of deep-laid plans, and the casual one-day excursionist was unlikely to be involved,

the countryside was full of bad characters quite ready to murder a sportsman for the sake of his gun and the little money he might have on him, and one only ventured out shooting in parties.

Mr Blunt got up one of these excursions a month or so after I reached Salonica, which might have ended in disaster to me. We left by carriage early in the morning, drove for a dozen miles, and then proceeded to form line and beat the country. About midday, in pursuit of a covey of partridges in thickish cover, I foolishly allowed myself to get separated from the rest, lost all sense of direction, and before long was as completely lost as a babe in the wood. I did not even know the name of the village where the carriages were left, and had I known it there was not a soul to be seen from whom the way could be asked. The Bay of Salonica was visible in the far distance, and it seemed best to make my way home across country, which I proceeded to do. Two or three miles farther on I came across an Albanian sheep-fold, and endeavoured to avoid it by making a detour, but two dogs attached thereto came after me, evidently meaning business. These Albanian sheep-dogs are sufficiently large and savage at any time, but to me in my forlorn condition they appeared of the size of elephants and the ferocity of lions. They got up to me and attacked, one on each side, without uttering a sound, which

made their serious intentions all the more apparent. I had not even time to shoulder my gun, but shot one from the hip, with the muzzle almost touching him. The other followed me howling.

Short as had been my sojourn in Salonica, I had already been warned of the awful results of killing these dogs—how their owners would sometimes exact a life for a life, and how the least one could expect was to be severely beaten and pay a heavy fine, calculated in the following way. The defunct was held up by his tail with his nose touching the ground, and corn poured over him until he was completely covered, the value of the corn required for this being the measure of the damages exacted. This had actually happened to a French Consul two or three years before, and who was I to escape when a Consul had succumbed?

By the grace of Providence the lamentations of the bereaved dog failed to attract the attention of his masters, and I was able to pursue my way to Salonica at a greatly accelerated rate of progression. By four o'clock or so I reached the Consulate, tired out, very hungry, and glad to accept the ministrations and sympathy of Mrs Blunt. We fully expected to see her husband before dinner, but when nine o'clock struck and he had not returned, the police were informed, and two zaptiehs sent out to find him. He came back in the

small hours of the morning, having spent the afternoon and evening in searching, with the aid of the inhabitants of two villages, for my mutilated corpse. He was not so pleased as he might have been at finding me snugly in bed and asleep, and this was the only time he ever lost his temper with me, though not for lack of other opportunities.

In the summer of 1886 the even tenor of our existence was disturbed by a visit from the Mediterranean squadron. There was nothing uncommon in this, except the fact that the Duke of Edinburgh was in command, and that his nephew, the present King, then Prince George of Wales, was serving on board H.M.S. *Dreadnought* as a junior lieutenant, which naturally added much éclat to the occasion. The squadron only stayed four or five days, during which we were kept pretty busy. The Duke called officially on the Vali (Governor - General), Mr Blunt attending the Duke and I attending Mr Blunt. Such visits are usually very dull and stiff functions, and this was no exception to the rule, though I did derive some slight pleasure from watching the expression of the Duke—who, as a good naval officer, liked his liquor strong—when a spoonful of rose-leaf jam was offered for his consumption, to be washed down by a glass of water. This exhilarating form of refreshment was declined with some emphasis. After the visit,

the Duke, the Prince, and the Vali lunched at the Consulate. Next day we all lunched on board the flagship, and in the evening the Blunts gave a ball in honour of the squadron, which was graced by the presence of the Duke and the Prince, as well as by contingents of officers from all the ships. I think this must have been the proudest moment of Mrs Blunt's life. To entertain naval officers was always one of her greatest pleasures, but to receive the son and the grandson of the Queen under her roof with the élite of Salonica society looking on was indeed an experience to delight her hospitable soul.

The visit of the fleet was not without its repercussion on my own affairs. Some time in the ensuing winter the Greek Government communicated to the Foreign Office information it professed to have gathered to the effect that a monastery on the mainland just off the peninsula of Mount Athos was being transformed by the Russians into a fortified place to the prejudice of Greek interests. This alarming piece of news was passed on to the Commander - in - Chief in the Mediterranean for investigation, and the Commander-in-Chief detailed H.M.S. *Albacore* to make inquiries on the spot, suggesting to her commanding officer that he should call at Salonica and borrow from Mr Blunt the young man whom he had seen in the Consulate to act as interpreter and local

expert. This was done, and I embarked.

The *Albacore*, a minute craft not half the size of a modern destroyer, possessed no accommodation for visitors. Her Commander generously gave up to me his own bunk, and himself slept in a hammock slung in the cabin, which served him both for bedroom and sitting-room. In lovely weather we rounded Mount Athos and soon reached our destination, and the Commander and I landed. We took guns with us, so as to conceal our political mission under the disguise of an innocent shooting excursion, but found nothing in the shape of game. I forget whether my nautical companion steered by the compass or whether we simply asked our way, but after three or four miles' wandering we reached the offending monastery, only to discover another Greek mare's nest. It lay snugly at the bottom of a little valley in a position where any fortification was out of the question. No more than eight monks, all Russians, it is true, formed the community, one of whom fortunately spoke a little Greek, so we were able to exchange ideas. They were jovial fellows, and seemed delighted to see us and fill us up with tea and many varieties of strange liquors manufactured on the premises, and to receive in exchange the latest news from the outside world.

I regret to say that this little community had so far relaxed the accepted rules of

monastic life as to share their solitude with a buxom female. On our first entry, which took the establishment rather by surprise, we saw her at an upper window between two of the reverend anchorites, and it certainly looked as if each had an arm round her waist. In the monasteries on Mount Athos proper the female sex is held in such abhorrence that the presence even of a hen is tabooed; here in the more human atmosphere of the plain less intolerant views evidently prevailed.

The return to Salonica was hardly so enjoyable as the passage out. The weather changed to a furious storm, which can hardly have been surpassed in violence by that which ruined the fleet of Darius (or was it Xerxes?) in the same locality twenty odd centuries before, and the wretched little *Albacore* rolled, pitched, and gyrated as if she was possessed by a devil. A far hardier sailor than myself might well have succumbed. Nearly forty years have elapsed since then, but I can remember as if it was yesterday hanging over the side in agony, and hearing the Commander as he watched my convulsions remark to his officers with mingled pity and contempt, "If I were as sick as that when I went to sea, I'm damned if I would not stop on shore." Which was rather ungrateful, as I was there entirely for his benefit and by no choice of my own.

On the whole, it was a happy

peaceful time at Salonica. None of the little Balkan States had for the moment the power or the inclination to give trouble. The Serbs were digesting the beating they received from the Bulgars in 1885. The Bulgars had internal worries of their own, which occupied all their attention. Greek ambitions were still in an embryo stage, and the Turks asked for nothing better than to be left alone to govern or misgovern their country after their own peculiar fashion. I certainly had ample time to prepare for the final examination which loomed before me in 1887, and in the spring of that year I was thinking of seriously getting to work when Mr Blunt suddenly fell ill. He was undoubtedly a very sick man, but it is probable that the local leeches who swarmed round his bed exaggerated the gravity of his condition in order to gain the greater kudos by curing him. Be that as it may, the concern which this misfortune aroused amongst every class of our community was a striking tribute to the unique position which the British Consul-General had attained in the town. The Turks even offered up prayers for his recovery in their mosques, a proceeding absolutely unique in my experience.

When, as the result of the Turks' prayers, or simply in the ordinary course of events, he became convalescent, he proceeded with his wife to Constantinople to recuperate,

and I was left in charge of the Consulate for a month or so. It was a little unfortunate to have this burden thrown on one on the eve of an examination, but as a matter of fact there was not very much extra to do, for Mr Blunt's absence coincided with a period of complete local calm.

In only one respect was fortune unkind to me. In the two previous years we had not had a single case of a slave applying to the Consulate for manumission; and when one day a black lady came to me for the purpose, I was quite at a loss how to deal with her. It was a curious anomaly that, while domestic slavery was a recognised institution, no person was compelled to remain a slave against his or her will. As a rule slaves were quite kindly treated, and differed little from ordinary domestic servants, so it was rare that any of them desired a change of status. When they did, they usually concluded to make things sure by coming first to a British Consulate. I made a good deal more fuss over the case than was at all necessary, shepherding her myself to the presence of the Vali, and remaining there until she was provided with the necessary papers.

The lady talked to her friends about her experiences, and some of them apparently concluded that as there was quite a young man in charge of the British Consulate, it might be sport to call and rag him. In pur-

suance of this idea two damsels presented themselves, young and not so dusky of hue as to preclude a certain comeliness. I experienced some difficulty in getting them to come to the point. They formulated no complaint of their own, but talked vaguely of some friend who was not happy in her domestic surroundings, and then relapsed into titters, furtive nudgings of one another, and the coquettish adjustment of veils. In the end their demeanour became so skittish that I was constrained to summon Hussein, the head Cavass, to act as chaperon. This experienced functionary at once saw through their frivolity, and bundled them out of the house without ceremony. He also dealt summarily with two or three subsequent visitors of the same type, and I was troubled no more.

The Blunts returned in July, and I left for Constantinople to undergo the final examination in the law, language, and history of Turkey and in International Law. On emerging successfully from this trial, I was now ready to be appointed Vice-Consul when a vacancy should occur, which might be in a year or might be delayed two years or more. For the moment my services were requisitioned as junior Dragoman to the Embassy.

The term "Dragoman" is rather an unfortunate one, recalling as it does the greasy and avaricious individual who acts as cicerone to travellers

in the East. It is simply a corruption of the word "Terjiman," meaning in Turkish an interpreter; and an Embassy Dragoman acts as intermediary between the Ambassador and the Turkish authorities, with whom he is unable to deal direct through ignorance of their language, customs, and mental outlook. "Oriental Secretary" would be a better name, and is in fact the term employed for similar officials in the Legation at Teheran and the Residency at Cairo. The Chief Dragoman at the Embassy is a very important person, who has, as local expert, to advise the Ambassador on all matters connected with the work of the Mission, to keep him informed of the trend of Turkish opinion and policy and of all interesting occurrences in Constantinople, and in fact to act as his Chief of Staff and Intelligence Officer combined. At this time Sir Alfred Sandison occupied the post of Chief Dragoman. I have already mentioned that he was Mrs Blunt's brother. The second Dragoman, Marinitch, was an Austrian subject, but an industrious and conscientious servant of British interests. He dealt chiefly with commercial matters, while Sandison looked after the political side. The third Dragoman, A. Block, a Vice-Consul, divided his energies between the two spheres, and was understood to be destined for the post of Chief Dragoman when the present occupant retired. There were also a native

clerk for Turkish, and a French clerk attached to the Dragomans' office.

My own functions were those of bottle-washer to the establishment. I read the Turkish newspapers, and noted, or omitted to note, anything that the Ambassador was likely to consider of interest. Marinitch would take me with him on his almost daily visits to the Porte, and try to impart the secrets of the labyrinths where the Turkish Government offices lay hid. When I was able to grope my way about they sent me to hunt for "Pussolas." These are documents obtained from a Registry to indicate the date on which a letter on any given subject has been despatched, and in dealing with the Porte it is essential to obtain them. Otherwise there is no certainty that instructions for provincial authorities, the promise of which has been obtained with vast pains from a Minister, may not have been consigned "*minder alti*"—under the sofa cushion—which is the Turkish equivalent for the European pigeon-hole or waste-paper basket. From time to time they would let me try my prentice hand on some little mission to the Customs or other small fry of the Turkish administration. It was also my privilege to be in attendance at the Embassy when others were keeping holiday, as on Friday, the Mussulman Sabbath, and Sunday, in case the Ambassador should want some one to translate a

Turkish letter or anything of the kind. On the whole, it was an existence which presented no particular attraction beyond the flesh-pots and comparative civilisation of the capital.

The Chancery of the Embassy was at this time full of the longest men in the diplomatic service. The Ambassador stood about six feet two inches in his socks, and there were two or three of his staff considerably taller than he. The duties of the secretaries were almost entirely clerical—copying despatches, ciphering telegrams, and so on; and as the Chancery was only open from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. they had some time for necessary relaxation. In the absence of a native court in the European sense of the word, and as the Turks in general kept entirely to themselves, each foreign embassy formed a little court in itself, round which clustered its nationals and such natives—Armenians and Greeks—as had social ambitions. To frequent Embassy entertainments, and to have even the lesser lights of diplomacy accept invitations to their own dances and dinners was the ideal of the Constantinople climbers, with the result that the Embassy secretaries lived in an atmosphere of continual adulation which was not good for them.

The Ambassador, Sir William White, had a remarkable career. His public service began in the lowly position of clerk to the British Consulate at Warsaw,

and by sheer hard work and ability he had attained to what was then one of the most important posts of diplomacy. With no outside backing, no influential friends, no money, nothing to recommend him but his own merits, to force his way into and succeed in a close corporation like the British diplomatic service was a task to daunt the boldest. Sir William White had done it, aided only by one bit of luck in that he happened to be Consul-General at Belgrade at the time when Servia was raised from a Principality to a Kingdom, and his claim to be promoted to Minister could hardly be ignored. Physically a very big man, with a loud voice, a blunt manner, and a rugged aspect, he was the very antithesis of the stereotyped diplomatist, and in the conflict which raged at the conference of ambassadors in Constantinople over the Eastern Roumelian question, his methods may have caused pain to his more sophisticated foreign colleagues. But he successfully maintained the British point of view against all comers, and held the ring for the Bulgarians to work out their own salvation.

Work was his sole occupation, and wallowing in the Eastern Question his one amusement. Of everything connected with the usual occupations of Englishmen, particularly games of all sorts, he was extraordinarily ignorant. On one occasion when petitioned by his

secretaries to consent to the chancery being closed at eleven so as to allow them to take part in a cricket match, after some humming and hawing he finally flabbergasted them with the contemptuous words, "Oh, take your rackets and go to your game of ball." But being a kind-hearted man with a great sense of public duty, he turned up on the ground in the afternoon, to be bored for an hour or two by the, to him, incomprehensible antics of the players.

I had not disported myself much more than a couple of months at the Embassy when I was agreeably surprised by the announcement that some one was wanted in a hurry to take charge of the Consulate at Erzeroum, and that I, being nearest to hand, was to have the job. I could learn little more about the place than that it was abominably cold there in winter, and that the shooting was fair. Also that there was trout-fishing in the neighbourhood. But the prospect of being on my own even for a limited time was so attractive that I should have jumped at the opportunity of going anywhere on earth on such terms. Not that they gave me the chance of declining. I was simply told to take myself off by the first boat, which happened to be an Austrian-Lloyd steamer sailing for Trebizond within the week. The Company did not devote its choicest craft to the Black Sea service, and the vessel which carried

me and my fortunes was a slow and aged cargo boat with limited accommodation for passengers. The saloon was pretty full, chiefly with American missionaries, a race with which I now made acquaintance for the first time, but of which I was destined to see much in the future. There were half a dozen couples on board, all coming out for the first time, and all newly wed. It was believed in the ship that the matches were arranged by the society which sent them out without consulting the parties concerned, each male missionary being told off to proceed to such and such a destination, and simultaneously to espouse such and such a lady missionary, and *vice versa*. But nowhere are more untruths current than on shipboard, and it is quite likely that this was merely a theory propounded to explain the amazing incongruity of some of the unions. Poor creatures, one could not but feel for them as they were dumped down in the various ports the ship touched at along the Black Sea coast, to find their way, with winter coming on, to their several destinations in a strange country, there to minister for the next ten years or so to the spiritual needs of so uninspiring a race as the Armenians. However, they went off cheerfully enough, and I was getting too anxious about my own journey to spare much pity for others.

On the fifth day out from Constantinople the ship arrived at Trebizond, a picturesque

little town which was once the capital of the kingdom of Trebizond, the last Greek State to fall before the conquering Turk, and surviving even Constantinople. The Consul kindly put me up for the two days of my stay there, and told off his Dragoman to make the necessary preparations for the road. The Dragoman's ideas on the subject of commissariat were not generous, and all he provided for a week's journey were three loaves of bread and a cold joint, which he called a "mutton-leg." He asserted that the road led through a land flowing with milk and honey, and that the best of fare was to be found at the khans on the way. As means of locomotion he selected a closed cab as being more suitable for the time of year than an open vehicle, as bad weather might be met with. In this he was perhaps right, though as a matter of fact neither rain nor snow fell while I was travelling.

Anyhow I set off in my four-wheeler, and a less comfortable journey it has never been my lot to experience. The interior of the carriage was unduly encumbered with luggage, which left little elbow-room for me and my dog. The dog proved to be very susceptible to jolting, which induced nausea in him to an unpleasant extent. I was entirely in the hands of the driver in the matter of selecting stopping-places, and he chose those where fodder was cheapest without regard

to other considerations. Once or twice he insisted on stopping short at three in the afternoon, wasting several hours of daylight, and when I expostulated he averred that the next khan was many hours' journey farther on, and we could not reach it before night. As I was quite unable to check his statement there was nothing for it but submission. There may have been better khans on the road—indeed this proved to be the case on my return journey next year—but there can hardly have been worse. They were little more than sheds divided up into compartments, indescribably dirty and swarming with predatory insects. Turkish coffee, tough native bread, and mellow eggs were the only provisions obtainable, unless one could make up one's mind to select a fowl from the hen-roost and wait while it was decapitated, plucked, and scorched before the inn fire for dinner. It may be imagined how thankful I was for the mutton-leg and the few comforts my tea-basket contained.

After leaving Trebizond the road soon begins to ascend and passes over the Zigana Dag, from some spot on the summit of which the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, struggling homewards from Cyrus's unlucky expedition into Persia, caught their first glimpse of the sea and gave vent to their historic exclamation. Thence it descends by gentle degrees into a plateau, and passing

the town of Baiburt begins to mount the Kop Dag. This is a higher and steeper range than the Zigana, and in the depth of winter presents difficulty if not danger to travellers. In October I found snow lying in both passes, but in the intervening country the temperature was pleasant enough, while at Trebizond summer still reigned. The road itself was very well designed, though, like all roads in Turkey, its upkeep was neglected. Being, however, the sole connection between the important fortress of Erzeroum and the sea, it was in better repair than most, and there were no places where a carriage could not easily pass, at any rate in a favourable season. There was little wheeled traffic, but we passed endless caravans of camels transporting European goods to Northern Persia through Erzeroum. I only met one European, a French engineer, returning to Trebizond, who stopped and conversed with me for a few minutes. We exchanged impressions on the subject of the accommodation afforded by the khans, and on my complaining of the unpleasant attentions paid me by the bugs and fleas, he replied with a shudder, "If it were only bugs and fleas!" And indeed when the journey was over and I examined my under-clothing I did find there the corpse of a louse, by some extraordinary trick of fortune the only one I have ever seen.

Apart from this brief interlude, my only society for the week was that of the driver and the two gendarmes who served as escort. The road was perfectly safe at this time, but the gendarmes were very useful in securing a room to myself at night, bundling out prior arrivals without ceremony. According to custom, the escort received ten piastres each as honorarium from a traveller for conducting him from their own post to the next, a matter of fifteen or twenty miles. I doubt whether they would have put up much of a fight in case of an emergency. They were armed with Winchester rifles of an ancient pattern evolved in the American Civil War more than twenty years before, and using rim-fire cartridges. I had the curiosity to examine the bandolier of one of them, which he laid aside during a stand-easy, and discovered from the tell-tale indentation in the rim that two-thirds of his cartridges had already missed fire. But the moral effect of their company is good, ensuring due respect and exemption from interference on the part of minor officials in search of backsheesh, and it is always advisable to have them on a journey, as the responsibility for one's safety is thus thrown directly on the Government.

The Kop Dagh once surmounted, the rest of the way to Erzeroum became plain sailing, and the seventh day after leaving Trebizond saw me safely arrived at my destination. The

Acting Consul, Devey, had already been there four years, and was naturally in a hurry to get away and enjoy his overdue leave, but he stayed three or four days to introduce me to the Vali and other Turkish officials and show me the ropes, and then went on his way rejoicing. I must confess to experiencing a considerable sinking of the heart when the only Englishman within two hundred miles disappeared into the distance, leaving me to my own devices. There was, however, so much to be done in shaking down into new quarters, making preparations for the winter, and generally taking stock of the situation, that the first feeling of desolation soon passed off.

The lease of Colonel Everett, the Consul's, house had just fallen in, but I was able to get it renewed. The landlord had bought most of the fixtures and let me buy them back, and with the aid of some sticks taken over from Devey, and others found in the town, I managed to provide enough for my modest requirements in the way of furniture. The house was a good one as houses go in that part of the world, with no claim to architectural beauty, but solidly built and warm. Being big enough to hold Colonel Everett, his wife, two children, and a governess, it was far too large for me, and I only attempted to furnish a few rooms. In conformity with local custom the stable was inside the house, opening into

the hall, and the horses made their entrances and exits by the front door. This system helped to keep the house warm in winter, but was apt to lead to unrest at night when a horse broke loose and assaulted its stable companion, as happened from time to time. I should mention that Devey's two horses had been passed on to me, and excellent little beasts they were, though the pair only cost £17. Fodder for the two came to less than £2 a month, and in most respects Erzeroum was a wonderfully cheap place to live in. A notable exception was firewood, which had to be imported from a distance of three days' journey, and consequently cost a fortune. Those who could not afford wood burned "Tezek," stable refuse made up into cakes and dried, which emitted a horrible smoke as well as heat.

My household was on a modest scale, consisting of a cook, Showa, a groom, Tatos, and a Cavass, Miguerditch, all three of them Armenians. Showa had learned her profession under the guidance of Mrs Everett, and was quite a good cook in a limited way. We seldom met, as she was a lady of strong will and forbidding appearance, with whom I thought it more tactful to communicate through an intermediary. On great occasions she wore a gold watch and chain and one black kid glove, gifts from her former mistress, and presented an almost regal aspect. Tatos was a bit of a

sneak and misappropriated the horses' fodder, but all grooms do that, and on the whole he was not a bad servant. Miguerditch was an excellent fellow, but his nationality made him useless for the basic duty of a Cavass, to overawe the badly-disposed and protect his master, though on occasions he could gird on a sword and do the ceremonial part of the business. He waited at table, and was thoroughly trustworthy.

The Erzeroum Consulate possessed a paid Dragoman, Yussuf Effendi by name, also an Armenian. He had a fair knowledge of English, and was supposed to serve as clerk when required. To this circumstance I attributed his touching anxiety to prevent my overworking myself by addressing unnecessary reports to the Embassy, which it might have been his task to copy out. He was fond in this connection of quoting to me the correct attitude of a former Acting Consul. "Mr E.," he would say, "go out shooting ALL the week. Then come home on Saturday and write one very good despatch." But what I most vividly recollect of Yussuf Effendi was the superb obeisance with which he would do me homage on arriving at the Consulate in the morning. It was neither a bow nor a genuflexion, but a complicated blend of the two executed with the hands tightly pressed on the abdomen, and more expressive of loyalty, abasement, and anxiety to be of service than any

salute which I have seen in my life.

Colonel Everett was at the time of my arrival still titular Consul at Erzeroum, and remained so until the end of 1887, though the disaster which had befallen him obliged him to leave the country nearly two years before. It was a mysterious affair, and happened in this wise. There were then two Cavasses, Miguerditch and a Turk, who slept on the premises in rotation. On the particular night in question it was Miguerditch's turn to go home, and the Turk should have remained on duty. Whether he connived at what followed or simply failed in his duty, the fact remains that he absented himself without permission, leaving the groom, an Armenian, to occupy the Cavasses' room on the ground floor. During the evening another Armenian, a man from a village a few miles away and known to the groom, called, and begged the latter to put him up for the night, as he had nowhere to go to. The groom consented, though he had, of course, no business to do so, and the two went to bed. In the middle of the night the groom was awakened by a blow administered by the stranger with a Cavass's sword which hung on the wall, and which unluckily had been sharpened recently. Somehow or other he escaped serious injury and ran screaming upstairs, followed by his assailant still carrying the sword. Colo-

nel Everett, awakened by the noise, came out of his bedroom in his nightshirt, and the Armenian went for him at once; but the Colonel closed with him, and succeeded in wresting the sword from him, though not before receiving severe cuts on his own head and hands. The Armenian then fell on his knees and begged for mercy, declaring that it was all a "mistake," and unluckily the Colonel was taken in by his protestations, and telling him to be off, turned round to enter his room and bind up his wounds. The sword was left lying on the ground, and the rascal picked it up like a flash and renewed his attack, but again with astonishing pluck and determination Colonel Everett closed with him and disarmed him, though terribly cut about in the process. This time Mrs Everett brought out a loaded revolver and begged her husband to make an end of the brute. But the blood was streaming down into his eyes and his right hand was in ribbons, and the first two shots he fired entered the wall. The third winged the groom, who had remained a spectator of the scene, and as the trigger was pulled for a fourth shot the heavy revolver fell and the bullet entered the Colonel's own ankle, shattering the bone. Had the Armenian come on again there would have been no possibility of further resistance, but his courage now failed him, and he ran downstairs and out of the house.

Mrs Everett helped her husband on to his bed, and then went to call a doctor and warn the police, who had no difficulty in finding and arresting the Armenian. At the trial which ensued he made no attempt to deny his guilt, which indeed was undeniable, and he was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, but the motive for the crime remained a mystery. All sorts of theories were current in the town, the most popular being that the Armenian had been suborned by the Russian Consulate to steal maps of the frontier districts known to have been made by Colonel Everett, an expert topographer, and had lost his head and exceeded his instructions. Colonel Everett himself inclined to the belief that robbery was the motive. A sudden attack of homicidal mania would have been an obvious and adequate explanation, but it was not suggested that the man was in any way unsound mentally.

Before leaving Erzeroum I

asked the Public Prosecutor in charge of the case, with whom I was on friendly terms, if he could not, now that the affair was over and done with, let me know privately what the official theory was. He replied that the culprit had confessed and had received the maximum legal penalty, and that the Turkish authorities had not cared to probe the matter further; but he certainly gave me the impression that he knew more than he cared to tell.

Colonel Everett received more than twenty cuts on the head and hands, besides the injury to his leg, which left a permanent lameness; but he recovered, and in a month or two was well enough to be carried in a litter to Trebizond, and thence to make his way to England. Though incapacitated for active military service, he subsequently became Professor of Topography at the Staff College, and then Assistant Director of Military Intelligence.

(To be concluded.)

AN UNREALISED ASSET.

OUR meeting came about in this wise: it was gorgeous early spring weather, and recommended by Gaston, the concierge at my hotel, I visited the *ménage* of one Louis Soil, selected a bright golden chestnut from his stables, and ordered it to be brought round to the hotel courtyard at nine the following morning.

Nine o'clock arrived, and with it a groom, whom Gaston greeted with enthusiastic approval.

I did not evince the same appreciation, seeing that this gentleman was leading a wall-eyed strawberry-roan, which, despite all Soil *père's* endeavours to boost it as a *pur-sang*, I had scorned the previous day with a stream of commentary anything but complimentary either to the poor beast or to Monsieur Soil's judgment in matters equine.

My wrath at the audacity of that unpleasant old man was cut short by the unexpected English of the groom—the more surprising since his conversation with Gaston had been in the French of France and not of Stratford-atte-Bowe.

He apologised and departed, to return a few moments later with Oriflamme, the chestnut, and a broad grin.

The first morning he rode at a respectful distance behind and in silence, but after several

rides I made him trot beside me, and thereby lured him into conversation.

At first abrupt monosyllables rewarded all efforts, but eventually for some obscure reason he accorded me his apparently rare approval, and told me a little of his chequered career and of his views on life in general.

From this, supplemented by information garnered from the praises sung by Gaston whenever he was mentioned, something of "*le bon Jeem's*" life-story came to light.

"*Le bon Jeem*," it must be admitted, drinks strong waters whenever opportunity offers, his speech is decidedly coarse, and by his own admission he has purchased raiment and forborne to pay.

The rest of the quotation, however, does not apply. Horses have played a great part in his life, but his bitterest enemy would never dream of attempting to spread any doubts concerning his dealings; not only has he won gymkhanas, but in his day has brought an Irish horse first past the post in Madrid.

He has ridden from Biarritz to Brussels, from Calais to Berlin, has sampled Albanian saddles, Moorish saddles, and sojourned along crooked and exceedingly narrow mountain paths with no saddle at all.

In appearance he is anything but a *Beau Brummell*: short, square-set—even stocky—with a weather-beaten face, a ragged black moustache, and bright, straight, brown eyes—frequently bloodshot, it is true, but always, to use a favourite expression of their owner's, “on the alurk.”

He is as clean as Sunlight—or its French equivalent—can make him, and his breeches and boots, though shabby, are perfectly made, and a very pleasing sight to those conservative British eyes, which will never accustom themselves to the ballet-skirt effects in huge checks, supported by gleaming patent-leather-clad legs, so favoured by French followers of *le sport*.

He is no post-war acquisition of the town, but an institution of many years' standing.

Born in one of the cabbage-strewn byways of Covent Garden, that special Providence which looks after gutter-snipes directed his semi-shod feet at an early date towards the precincts of a racing stables of the old, and none too easy, school.

After a few years of this rather exacting mode of life he selected the vocation of groom in private service, and, slightly disfigured but still in the ring, joined the personal staff of one of England's best-known owner-trainers.

One morning we were discussing the reasons for the unpopularity of this very efficient gentleman. Jim concluded his

speech for the defence with the following truism—

“He always played straight with me; long after I left 'is service 'e 'elped me over a bad time when 'e 'eard I was laid up with one (adjective) arm broken and out of a job. I don't 'old with judgin' men by what other people 'as to say about 'em. Seems to me it's a sight better only to count how they been with you and your pals, which is all that matters about it to you, ain't it, miss? Most fellers are (two adjectives) hypocrites.”

I regret to add that he spat as though thereby to lend further emphasis to this assertion.

He originally appeared in the *station d'hiver* in the entourage of a charming but dissolute Irishman, who, having awakened one day to the bitter fact that baccarat, a racing stud, and expensive friends were beyond his means, converted his few remaining assets to hard cash and, together with half a dozen hunters, a few faithful retainers, and a four-in-hand which quite lifted the town out of itself, shook the soil of the British Isles from his unpaid-for boots, and repaired to this remote corner of Gaul to turn over a new leaf.

The proverbial difficulties of caring for the pence, plus a too fervent appreciation of the wine when it was red, proved too much for him.

He died, and with one of

his dying breaths counselled Jim with a quotation from his fellow-countryman :—

“‘If your purse it is slender,’ says Larry, ‘tis better
To owe a small trifle than want a
great deal.’”

There was no money to pay the long over-due wages of his retainers, but to Jim he left the six hunters, and with these and a gold-mounted crop presented him by a prince of the blood as a token of appreciation, to lend an air of integrity to the business, Jim set up a hire stables in the neighbourhood.

At first success crowned the venture, but, alas! he had been infected with his late master's love for the flowing bowl.

The tentacles of the octopus of debt gripped the stables, took toll of the horses one by one, and the enterprise ended in disaster, leaving Jim penniless and out of a job.

An American wintering in the vicinity engaged his services, having first wrung from him a reluctant promise to forswear the joys of Bacchus.

He kept his word, worked hard, and soon became a pillar of the establishment, going over to Leicestershire every year to buy horses for his master, who placed a great deal more faith in his judgment than is generally accorded by New Yorkers to Britishers even amongst their employees.

Upon the American's dying

in Flanders, Jim cashed his bequest at the local *Société Générale*, and drifted into partnership with Louis Soil, to whose fast-decaying stables he brought fresh horses and a new lease of life.

Tandem they drive extraordinarily well, and to their mutual financial benefit, so I doubt very much that Jim will ever return to the land of his birth for any length of time, but will satisfy himself instead with occasional horse-dealing trips to make certain that Newmarket goes through its regular course, and Dover's cliffs are still the same colour.

For France and for the French people he has a great devotion, an understanding of their faults and a pride in their virtues which at first scarcely seems *en suite* with his bullet head and bull shoulders.

As we scoured the wonderful countryside, hacking along the white roads and watching the wisps of morning mist blowing away before the sun like scraps of chiffon trailing over the silver river and pale shimmering green woodlands, I learnt to appreciate the French peasant's thrift, labours, and powers of endurance.

The only occasion I heard him contemptuous of his adopted countrymen was when he spoke of them as would-be breeches-makers.

“Ladies' clothes they can make,” he opined, “but breeches—ugh! Why, beggin' pardon, Miss, I'd sooner wear

English ones wiv' patched seats. These I've 'ad seven year—and not paid for yet, neither—but they have got cut.

"I did try a French tailor once. The best cloth and 'ashed. Oh, it was crool!

"An' me breeches did used to be like a religion with me," he added mournfully.

His further cryptic comments when garments of Paylova outline marred his line of vision at a local meet would have given a bargee points in vividness of description, besides being a joy to any one who has ever suffered at a tailor's hands.

He holds decided views on most things, and being anything but insular in his conversation, applied them to a variety of topics ranging from South African racing, on which subject he was brief but very much to the point, to the progress of Mr Pussyfoot Johnson and his followers, in what to him is apparently anything but God's Own Country.

Over-observant acquaintances frequently told me of Jim witnessed observing the redness of the wine far too closely, or using his fists in a blind rage after a super-dose of absinthe, but I never saw him in this condition, and he never failed to be in time in the mornings.

True bloodshot eyes and small gashes from a razor wielded by trembling hands were sufficient evidence, but some one invariably saw to it that he was as well scrubbed and brushed as ever, and that his polished

boots still gleamed in rivalry to the sun.

It may be recorded also that his hands, even on these aspen-emulating mornings, never failed to deal effectively with his mount should it elect to put into practice theories of how bucking bronchos behave when bored with their duties, though at the same time his form of reproof was hair-raising to a degree.

His knowledge of horseflesh is unquestioned and respected for miles around. He buys and sells for the entire neighbourhood, brusquely refusing all commission, and the man who tries a crooked deal finds it wiser to leave the district, giving neither address nor any definite date of return.

Of course this quaint Jeem adores animals, and various people affirmed that no hut is too isolated and no mid-winter's night too biting for him to turn out at a moment's notice to doctor the shambling sick horse of some peasant.

Another spoke of the unofficial R.S.P.C.A. he has founded in the town, and of the break in his queer nose gained during battle with a huge Basque, who, ignoring its laws, had been seen ill-treating a half-starved mongrel.

Healthy dogs, mangy dogs, thoroughbreds, and hounds of doubtful international breeds trot after him through the streets like children after the Pied Piper, and even the *épicerie* cat leaves her seat on the rum-

cask to permit of his rubbing her silky ears.

He told me that a famous French racehorse owner had once said to him—

"We French can make good cavalymen, efficient grooms, and even passable trainers, but horses will do more for you Britishers than for any one else in the world. I think it is because you consider them as people and can talk their language."

I learnt a circus trick of the hands to show off Oriflamme to her best advantage when, returning hotelwards just before the *déjeuner* hour, we were obliged to walk our animals along the thronged sun-washed boulevard.

"Some people," he ejaculated the while, "talks o' allus givin' 80 per cent 'ands and 20 per cent seat. It ain't right. Seat yer can learn, but 'ands—you're born with 'em. If yer understands animals yer 'ands don't need trainin'. They just look after themselves natural most times."

In the *hinterland* of the stables Jim has a minute den, a sort of holy of holies as spotless as a yacht, filled with his most cherished possessions.

There are sporting prints from an English duke, racy literature from a Romanist divine, an old drinking-horn, the gift of a French general, crops of every shape and size from all parts of the globe, a white fur cloak from a pillar of the Italian army; and on a

Victorian sofa-table, a chased silver cigarette-box, presented him by a South American millionaire, sits cheek by jowl with a shell-covered plush box shrieking its Southend origin.

Beneath sundry signed sketches and innumerable photographs of horses, copies of Ruff's 'Guide' rub shoulders with a Bible and various treatises on veterinary surgery.

From a shrine of its own smiles an autographed studio-portrait of one of the best beloved of Parisian actresses, for which hundreds who have clamoured in vain would willingly give its weight in gold.

This so charming and sought-after lady, who spends a month of every year in a villa near-by, will ride with no other escort than "*ce bon Jeem*," who trained her mare to walk up the shallow steps to her verandah to demand its morning ration of sugar.

The whole collection, as odd as its owner, bears evidence of his catholic taste in friends, and from the shell-box upwards they are treasured above rubies—all are irreplaceable, and accordingly each has its allotted niche in his twisted and battered heart.

It was with great regret that I bade good-bye to Oriflamme, and shook Jim's embarrassed and extremely horny hand in farewell after a long canter down the wide oak avenue on the last morning of my stay.

A few moments later a page

appeared in the hotel lounge with a tissue-paper parcel.

Open, this revealed a tightly-bound mass of Madame Ravary roses and freesias, typifying the conservatism of the British retainer, whose love of serried bouquets remains under all skies, come what may.

Attached to the tribute was a painstakingly written note :—

“From Oriflamme — hoping the liberty will be pardoned and no offence taken when none was intended. Respectful servant,

“JIM.”

Our politicians may consume caviare with Chicherin, or fraternise over frothing lager with enemies, alleged “ex,” but it requires more than the *faux-pas* of statesmen, the petty quarrelling of ministers, ranting upheavals in the Cabinet, or hootings in the Press, to sow distrust and disillusion in the hearts of the citizens of that obscure corner of France. They have elected to consider “*ce bon Jeem*” as being “teepee-cally English,” and, regardless of Continental crises, staunchly support the spirit of the Entente in consequence.

THE ASTONISHING LAND OF COORG.

I.

THAT invaluable work the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' says of Coorg that it is "a province of India, administered by a commissioner, subordinate to the governor-general through the resident of Mysore, who is officially also chief commissioner of Coorg. . . . It is the smallest province in India, its area being only 1582 square miles." The local bard, on the

other hand, says Coorg is a string of pearls, the finest of the kingdoms of Jambudwipa; what Mahameru is among mountains or the Sampige among trees, so is Coorg among the kingdoms of this earth. From their differing angles, and in so far as each purports to go, both these descriptions may be taken as correct.

II.

In the title which has been chosen for these notes I have called Coorg an Astonishing Land; so it certainly is. It is astonishing in the respect already mentioned, that, being considerably smaller than Aberdeenshire, it is ranked as a fully and separately constituted province in a country where mere common districts run to half the size of Scotland. That fact in itself should lead one to expectations. But it is astonishing in many other ways, and principally because, being situated in the heart of the South Indian peninsula, it contrives to be what it is. As a solitary island somewhere in the South Seas it would be remarkable and beautiful, but it

would be at least credible; wedged in between Tellicherry and Hunsur it is scarcely that. The more you know of South India, the less believable is Coorg. The globe-trotting stranger it might attract by virtue of its very remarkable physical beauty, but him it would not so much astonish as delight. To the exile who has cast in his lot with the Tamil and the Telugu and the local genius of South India, it is the essence of the place, the amazing differences, that compel attention. The country is different, the people are different, there is actually something different in the very air itself. A high authority once told the writer of these notes that the

Coorg was the gentleman of South India; let it be at once admitted that this, so far as it goes, is true. At all events, gentlemen or no, the Coorgs have embodied in themselves most of what is left in South India of manliness.

A comparison of Coorg with Scotland is really almost inevitable. Scotland in the days of Sir Walter and Coorg at this present moment are not nearly so dissimilar as latitude and distance would suggest. Both have grand and regal highlands with a sturdy mountain-dwelling race; both have lowlands attached. Clear burns, good for the fishing; great stretches of forest; superb and unforgettable prospects; rough man-making weather; a crofting, droving people, regarding themselves as just a stage or two better than any other people on earth,—both have these things. In both music flourishes, and dancing and the convivial board not uncheered by usquebaugh. Both are rich in folk-lore and folk-songs, in hearts ready for hospitality and hands ready for the sword. If you can think of a Scotland where the Highlanders are brown of skin instead of white, where the temperature is governed by a tropic sun, and where the weather is at times even worse than it is here—if you can imagine such a Scotland set amid the shiftiness of effeminacy of, let us say, modern Greece, then you will perhaps form a better general notion of Coorg

in South India than many words could convey. And you should have some notion of the cause of those qualities of astonishment I have predicated for it.

In one sense Coorg does not astonish. It does not contain the highest mountain in South India or anything like it; it contains no very high mountain at all. It has no Lamb's Rock, no Shivasamudram, or Gersoppa Falls. It boasts no architectural prodigies like the Great Stone Bull of Tanjore or Tirumal Naik's palace at Madura. It is not, in a word—and for this may the powers be thanked—a “show place.” Yet there are moments, when the sun is going down behind the fastnesses where Cauvery takes its holy source; when the day is breaking over the vast amphitheatre of the Mysore plains; when a rising moon struggling with clouds strikes on the sides of the Abyal Hill; or in any day of December or January when you stand on the summit of a chosen mountain, and in the wonderful shining and lucent air seem to yourself not so much in the world as somewhere in the heart of a ball of flawless crystal—there are moments such as these when it presents you with a beauty which is hardly of earth. It is then that you turn from the encyclopædias and the gazetteers and find company in the poets, calling Coorg no country of earth, but a veritable fairyland, a true necklet of pearls

lying on the fair bosom of Cauvery's own self.

There are exceptional advantages about Coorg. In the first place, it has five—or it may be six—golf-courses, and excellent roads everywhere. In the second, Mercara, the head-

quarters, is sixty difficult miles from any railway, good, bad, or indifferent; and there is not a single hotel, boarding-house, or *pension* in the whole province. Coorg is not the Nilgiris; but then that cuts both ways.

III.

To tell how the British connection with Coorg began and developed would necessitate a vast deal of history, which can be read elsewhere. It is a connection which begins in 1790 at a conference between Viraraja, King of Coorg, and Robert Taylor of the East India Company at Tellicherry; and the first phase of it ends in Kensal Green Cemetery with the tombstone of a second Viraraja, the father of the Princess Gauramma, whose godmother was Queen Victoria and no less. It is a story of ups and downs, bright moments and dark. Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan come into it as into all Indian history of their day, and with their usual effect of driving into incongruous unity counterforces which might never otherwise have met. The British and the Coorgs were bound in the nature of things to come into contact sooner or later, but it might well have been as enemies instead of as friends, in which case—as experience on one occasion proved—our task would have been any-

thing but easy. The Coorgs certainly stood by us against Tippu, and were good and valuable friends, for which we recompensed them with more justice than generosity. Later the excesses of the Rajas drove the British to intervene in Coorg's domestic affairs, with the upshot that Coorg is now a province of British India, and Viraraja II., the last of his line who actually reigned, occupies a conspicuous grave, as already stated, within easy earshot of the clamorous traffic of the Harrow Road.

It is that amazing line of monstrous tyrants that makes the history of Coorg between 1790 and 1834 read like a novel, albeit of a grim and terrifying sort. Never surely, since the worst days of the Fall of Rome, can any throne have supported so bloodthirsty a crew. They were not Coorgs—they were Lingayats from Ikeri, an offshoot of one of the many petty kingdoms into which the sudden collapse of Vijayanagar split up Central South India; and the story

of how their forerunner, beginning as a priest, wrought his way first through compulsory doles and then through watchmen and bodyguards to the sovereignty of the country and the assassination of the existing chiefs, makes remarkable reading. One would hardly credit the Coorgs with the impulse to subject themselves, body and soul, to an outsider; yet that is what they did, and as a result Coorg is full of dark stories of royal relatives murdered and hidden in the depths of the jungles, of favourites betrayed and assassinated with barbarity, of suspects violently removed. Strange to wander through this country of lustrous beauty and to stumble every now and then on some blackened spot, some dark and evil memory, some legacy of hate and murder. One hears how

the yard of the fort ran blood as it runs water now on a heavy monsoon day; and to those who have lived in the fort through a monsoon or two that is a telling description. What is one to make of a homicide who, in order to support a proposed plea of insanity, half cut his own throat and three-quarters poisoned himself with corrosive sublimate? Yet unless the historians err, that is what was done by the great Viraraja in his melancholy end, when he was dying a half-mad homicide, tortured by grief for his wife's death and remorse for his own innumerable atrocities.

That is Coorg, and there is a touch of Scotland about it again—the beauty clouded with the melancholy of old stories, the great past stained with blood inhumanly spilt.

IV.

The climate of Coorg, like all things in that astonishing land, is distinctive. January is clear blazing sunshine—marvellously clear, “actinic,” to use the photographers’ word—and an air so translucent that it can hardly be thought to exist. February and March carry on this tradition; but the air is clouded with the smoke of innumerable fires—some on the grass hills where they are intended, some in the forests where they are not.

O’ nights the horizon is a zigzag line of fire, picking out the familiar contours of the hills. April is hot—so far as in the higher planes of Coorg it ever is really hot—and still dry, with showers. May is diversified by the heralds of the monsoon—crashing, bellowing thunderstorms in the afternoons and nights, blue mists of a morning, and in the evenings most wonderful fireflies. Then one morning in early June the mists fail to clear; and over

the south-west hills there sweep wave upon endless wave of light-grey clouds, carrying the mind back to the Pentlands or the Lammermoors or the hills of Rannoch. That is the burst of the monsoon, and thereafter it rains till the middle of October. You may get four hundred inches, or you may get two hundred, or you may get sixty—it all depends in what part of the province you are, and how far you have succeeded in escaping from the terrible south-west corner where the Cauvery rises, and where the priests of the upper temple must live for days on end in an atmosphere that is more water than air. The monsoon rain in Coorg is not a drizzle or a Scotch mist or any other euphemism; it is rain.

It must be admitted freely that this is a drawback: unless one is a grower of paddy, one could do with a great deal less of it. No one who has not been through it can realise the infinite dreariness of a solid three weeks of soaking, heart-destroying rain, averaging perhaps three inches a day. It is very pleasant at first: you don old clothes and a waterproof, and go out for brisk walks, and speak of the fine bracing weather. You come in and change and dry your clothes and try again. Then you find that in a single night all your boots and the insides of all your leather trunks have grown a coating of green fungus that smells most vilely; subse-

quently you discover that no waterproof, mackintosh, or oil-skin on earth will really keep out the Coorg monsoon when once it starts in earnest, and by slow stages you admit that the sensation of cold rain beating upon the face, and mud-and-water compounds seething over the insteps, has its limitations. Then there are only two things to be done—provided, of course, you cannot go away altogether: either you must continue to walk in the rain and mud with cursings and bannings and bitter upbraidings of the detestable climate, or you must take to the club and the fireside and bridge and music and tobacco and drink. In which case you will develop a liver that will make you regret it.

The present writer has been moved almost to tears by the sight of a patch of blue sky which lasted perhaps ten minutes, and was never much greater than the proverbial man's hand: that was in August in Coorg. But the awakening in October, the rebirth of the world, is something worth living for. All countries have a legend of a deluge, of the rescue of the world from a waste of waters or a sea-monster or some other aqueous calamity. Savages make a festival of such a thing, civilised races give thanks for it regularly in church. In Coorg that joyful rescue is an annual event; and the Coorg, with that good sense which

one might expect of him, makes it his biggest and happiest holiday of the year. The day of the sun's entry into Libra in mid-October is a day of days. Without living it no man can understand the blessedness of that rebirth, the delight of the conviction that the sun still shines and has power to conquer, that for another eight months the black devil of the monsoon has been driven headlong away over the hills. Those who live in a light monsoon may be richer in comfort, but they miss our rare experience.

And incidentally the monsoon is a godsend to the Coorg

husbandman, for it enables him to grow such paddy crops as are rarely to be seen, whereby he satisfies not only the needs of himself and his family, but has great residue for profitable export into Malabar. That is another distinction in Coorg—from the official's point of view—that should make it a happy country. There is never any remission of assessment, because the water supply never fails. Soon or late down comes the monsoon, and the joyful ryot, drenched to the skin and up to his knees in mud, puts a boat-shaped umbrella on his back and goes forth to collect his blessings.

V.

Who are the Coorgs? That is the standing riddle of South Indian ethnologists, and the more the amateur delves into its intricacies the more hopelessly befogged and lost does he become. Whence came these odd, these strikingly different people, and how did they get into Coorg? They are certainly not the aborigines of the place; for these one must fall back upon the Yeravas, Kurumbas, and other jungle savages, not dissimilar to the hill-tribes found all over South India. No doubt the Coorg has a good deal of the South Indian about him, especially the West Coast South Indian; but his characteristically individual nature, his remarkable

and unique dress, and certain of his customs and usages are not of South India at all. Barring all ethnology and arguing from common-sense, one would call the Coorgs a separate people.

The Coorg dress is the most picturesque of any in India—a long black coat with sleeves cut short at the elbow, so as to show the white shirt underneath; a scarlet and gold sash; and two knives, a large and a small. This is not the dress of any other South Indian—or indeed any other Indian at all. There is a touch of the Arab about it, but not much; and I believe that in Thibet one comes across something of the kind. Clothes

perhaps do not make the man ; but if you find a man deliberately and by tradition wearing clothes which he should not wear, it is reasonable to argue that there is something intrinsically unique about that man himself. A long black coat flapping well below the knees ! Could anything be less natural for a country of mud and rain and flooded torrents ? Leaving aside dress, one would naturally turn for information to anthropometric measurements, language, and religion. This is no place to write of nasal indices, of brachycephalic platyrrhines, and such fearsome jargon ; let it be said merely that anthropometric results lead us into trouble rather than out of it. They afford us very mixed inferences. Language again is a let-down. There ought to be traces of Northern India or Arabic or some Semitic tongue (the Phœnicians are by no means out of court in the candidature for Coorg ancestry), but there are none. Coorg is disappointingly a dialect of Canarese, and to all appearance nothing else. In regard to religion it is usual to say that this consists of ancestor and demon-worship, overlaid with Brahman cults. If the present writer's personal experience is worth anything, that is a very misleading way to talk. Nor is it any better to say—as has also been said—that the Coorg religion is the worship of the Cauvery, plus devils. If you

ask a Coorg what his religion is, he will tell you that he is a Shaivite Hindu—and he will be speaking the truth. The reverence paid to the Cauvery is natural in a country where that great and holy river takes its source ; and the special veneration of ancestors is simply a peculiar—and agreeable—trait of the Coorg character. The spirits of the departed dwell in or at times attend little isolated temples in the fields—the *keimada*,—and once a year they are honoured there. As for the demons and devils, all village and rustic religion in South India is demonology of a kind ; it is no more so in Coorg than anywhere else, and is practised there by the same ignorant classes as elsewhere.

I believe the present tendency is to class the Coorgs as Aryo-Scythians or Scytho-Dravidians, or some such thing ; but this seems to get us little further in the search for their mysterious origin. Let us hear their own version, which may be traced in the celebrated Kaveri-Purana, if one has the leisure and the patience to strip off the dense overlay of Brahminical balderdash in which it is buried. There was once a certain prince, by name Chandravarma, a youth of great learning and devotion, who worshipped Parvati with such assiduity that the goddess invited him to ask a boon of her. Chandravarma asked (*inter alia*) for a better kingdom than his

father's and a fruitful wife of his own caste. The goddess agreed to the first request, and indicated to him that country in which she herself would presently appear in the form of the Cauvery river—*i.e.*, Coorg, —but she denied him the second. Chandravarma, of course, was a Kshatrya by caste, but Parvati created for him a Sudra girl of extreme bodily perfection. Now the Sudra is very much lower than the Kshatrya, and ordinarily intermarriage would be impossible; so that Chandravarma very naturally declined the girl, and told the goddess she could take her back and the kingdom with her. Parvati, however, overruled him by foretelling him eleven fine sons from the Sudra girl, who would not technically be Sudras, but would be a special and unique class by themselves, and equal to the Kshatryas in everything save the possession of the four Vedas and six Angas. The Sudra girl in due course produced the eleven sons, who were all that Parvati had promised, and wore the holy cord and the tonsure. So far, so good; but how was the race to continue? You cannot expect Kshatryas to give their daughters in marriage to the offspring of a Sudra girl. By one of those remarkable coincidences, however, which so often come to the rescue in the simple-minded Hindu mythology, the King of Vidarbha—*desha* chanced to have no fewer than a hundred daugh-

ters born of Sudra mothers. Chandravarma proposed an alliance, Vidarbha jumped at it, and the eleven semi-Sudra sons divided up the hundred semi-Sudra daughters between them. The thing was done,—and hence the Coorgs!

There is one point in this tale which is worth noting—its authors, whether Brahmans or Coorgs, saw clearly that the Coorgs were different, and that this difference must be explained. They couldn't account for them, couldn't assign them to any specific category. Ethnologists to-day are in no better case. You may invent terms such as Aryo-Scythians and Scytho-Dravidians, but it is doubtful whether they convey much more or are in any way more useful than the "Sudra-Kshatryas" of the old Puranic myth.

The "different-ness" of the Coorg becomes very quickly manifest in many little ways. For one thing, you can invite him—the educated or better-class Coorg at any rate—to a meal. You may set before him a chicken, a leg of mutton, a piece of roast pork, and he will eat it with you. You may offer him a whisky-and-soda, and he will drink it with you—and a stout one too. He will speak to you openly and pleasantly about his family and his home. I suppose it is entirely improper and wrong, but somehow the existence of these little amenities does seem to make all the difference in the

world. No one who has not been through it can realise the eternal irritation and boredom of the orthodox caste system when applied to intercourse with Europeans: of always having to remember that so-and-so cannot eat this or drink that, that you must not take such-and-such by the hand or ask him to meet such another; that you cannot inquire naturally for the health of X.'s wife or his married daughters; that when Y. comes near you must tell the bearer to lock up the dogs in a godown. *Autres pays autres mœurs*, of course, and the caste system has many and great advantages; but all these inhibitions] and difficulties are the first bricks in that horrid wall of misunderstanding and distrust that rears its ugly form between the two races in India. They are the primary cause of Amritsars and Jallianwallahbaghs and Rowlatt Acts and many another evil; and besides that, they are a sad weariness to the flesh.

The Coorg is a sportsman and an athlete, endowed by nature with a superb eye and an admirable physique, both of which gifts the younger generation is trying hard to destroy by means of cheap cigarettes. After you have eaten and drunk together, he will ride with you anywhere; he will shoot snipe with you—but better; he will tramp with you over mountains and through jungles in pursuit of the bison, of which

he has not the slightest fear. He will conduct you to his house or the house of a friend, and there you will be regaled with fruits and coffee, or strong waters if you so desire; and the men of the house will sing you a plaintive *palamē*, beating time with crooked sticks on monkey-skin drums, and the lads of the house will dance for you with grace and vigour, and the girls of the house (who are likely to be very pretty) will peep at you with interest from behind pillars. You will meet neither the bumptious gaucherie of the Oriental youth nor the abominable prurient super-modesty of the Oriental maiden. You will go on your way feeling that you have been received on equal terms, without grovelling and without unnecessary display, almost as a friend, certainly as a fellow human being; and if this does not delight and astonish you, you cannot have had much experience of the ordinary "plains" of India. I do not say that the Coorg is the simple-minded highlander which some have made him out; his character is very complex, and like all characters has its undesirable aspects. He is given at times to over-astute scheming, and he is prone to a ridiculous conceit which leads him to imagine slights and insults where none exist. But he is an exceeding great relief in South India. The Madrassi is of all types, no doubt; but the Coorg is one's best argument against

the unjust and age-old assertion that there are no men south of Delhi.

Coorg society and social life is based upon the family, and is a rather beautiful example of what is perhaps the noblest of such systems. Every family has its *ayan* or ancestral house, and at stated times and seasons thither do all members of the family repair. The Coorg does not live in towns or villages; there are villages in Coorg—*pettas* they are called—but they are inhabited by Moplah traders or Hindu *komatis*, and the Coorg goes there only on market-day once a week. Your Coorg is a lover of nature and the quiet country: if he breaks away from the *ayan* house—as in these days of hustle and competition he tends more and more to do—it is to find himself a *koplu* somewhere—a little house of his own nestling in the woods on the side of a rice valley. There is an extraordinary fascination about this feature of Coorg scenery—the little well-built houses with their gateways and paved entrance passages tucked away in the dark woodland along the margin of a sea of paddy freshly vivid and green; of an evening with a soft light bathing everything it is most charming to look down such a valley and mark the emerald of the paddy, the dark frame of the wooded lands, the red-tiled roofs or drab thatch of the houses, the blue evening smoke, the straight white stems of the

areca-nut palms, the fresher green of coco-nuts. Nothing extraordinary, no doubt, but very peaceful and soothing and unique.

Of Coorg customs a book might be written—indeed, a friend of mine who is a Sub-Inspector of Police and something of an authority on the subject has just written a very long one. I can hardly make much of them here. But there is one custom which in justice to the Coorgs I must mention—that of adult marriage. The horrors of juvenile marriages are apparent on the surface, and the deeper you go into the subject the more you unearth. The Coorg steers clear of them. In Coorg it is still possible—and highly enjoyable—to attend a wedding which is the natural union of a grown man and a grown girl, and in which the principal parties have had most to say. It is still possible to talk of love and love-marriages in the sense in which we use such terms at home. That is Coorg; but you will admit that it is not South India.

There is just one disconcerting feature about the Coorgs—their ready willingness to be dominated by the outsider. If an Apparandra or a Kodandera or a Nadikerianda, or any other of the fine old Coorg families should chance to read this, he will probably buckle on his *odi-katti*, his war-knife, and set out for my blood. For the Coorg's profession is all to the

contrary, but the fact remains. I have made mention of the odd history of the Coorg Rajas—how they, being foreigners of a different country and caste, succeeded not only in raising themselves to the throne by ousting the indigenous *naiks* and chieftains, but even in imposing on the people of the country a despotism of terror which must be very nearly unequalled in civilised history. Christophe is conceivable in Haiti, scarcely in India in the nineteenth century. Viraraja and his successors could never have established their horrible rule had there not been some innate tendency in the ruled to submit to them. It is very puzzling, for it is just what one would *not* expect in the Coorg; but the tendency exists. It exists to-day. The Brahman is almost unquestionably an outsider to the Coorg social system; yet he has wormed himself in until his ascendancy is scarcely less than in the surrounding districts of Madras. He works the temples, even the temple at the Cauvery source, and in weddings and births and burials he must appear and preside. It is the same thing with the political agitator: I have seen and heard a fourth-rate Madrassi

vakil talk over an assembly of Coorgs, any one of whom was worth a dozen of him. But they gave in and were dominated; he opened his mouth and they were dumb. This gift of subservience is good in so far as it engenders loyalty—and loyalty is and always has been one of the brightest jewels in the category of the Coorg virtues; but it is bad altogether as indicating the absence of the power to discriminate. The Coorg can think for himself, and he ought to; but very often he won't.

There are, of course, other people in Coorg besides the Coorgs themselves—indeed, the latter are but a quarter of the population or less. There are Gowdugals from Mysore and Vokkaligas and Shivacharis from the same airt; there are Yeravas and Kurumbas and Kudiya and other jungle tribes. There are various West Coast and Mysorean peoples; there are Moplah traders who come, says the Coorg, with a basket of fish one year and open a prosperous cloth-shop the next. There are Madrassi Brahmans and Madrassi non-Brahmans. There are all these and many others. But they do not really matter: it is the Coorgs who count.

VI.

To the globe-trotter—by whom I mean the ordinary uninitiate in Indian affairs—Coorg would be more of a delight than an astonishment; perhaps one requires to be an

official who has laboured in the bad places of India fully to appreciate the staggering differences of Coorg. To begin with, the area of the place is small enough to be workable, and further, the establishment one is given for the work is—or was before the current mania for economy came into existence—commensurate with the duties to be performed. That means more than you might think to men accustomed to keep a huge division going with the help of an establishment which could be multiplied by three and still remain inadequate. One can carry the methods of the axe too far, and with a country such as India of to-day, where the work is growing like Jonah's gourd, the axe is unsuitable. Coorg is workable; there is no reason why a man spending three years of his service there should not get really into the heart of things, know his people and his district, and become something better than the figurehead that routine work and absurdly frequent transfers make of most of us. That is one of the advantages of Coorg from the official point of view.

Another aspect—an advantage or not according as you look at it—is the number of Europeans in the province. I mentioned that the place contains some six golf-courses, and the Coorg, with all his passion for games, does not play golf. These are made

by the noble army of planters, and the planters make life in Coorg a very different thing from life in the ordinary up-country area of Madras. Fortunes are not made out of Coorg coffee nowadays as they were in the time of the boom, but livings and comfortable livings still are; and a planter's life there must have many attractions. On every other hillside in Coorg you will see the neat lines of silver oak that mark a coffee estate, and the red roofs of bungalows shining through the trees—bungalows where the weary official, unless he be an ass, may enjoy many pleasant hours.

The first symptom of an earthly Paradise the official discovers in Coorg is, as has been said, that his people are fellow-humans and intelligible; the second is that the place is of workable size and reasonably staffed; the third he can scarcely credit at all. It is that his lower subordinates are generally honest. I do not wish to go so far as to say that lower subordinates in other parts of India are generally dishonest, but there is often the doubt; and because they are emphatically *not* fellow-humans and you do not know them (their own doing, I insist, at least as much as yours), you can never be really sure. In Coorg this also is different. Ever since the days when Viraraja II.'s excesses proved too much for his long-suffering people and brought about the

substitution of the Royal Arms for the Coorg Imperial "V," we have very wisely followed a policy of "Coorg for the Coorgs." Hence most of the subordinates in Government service spring from those scions of Chandra-varma of whom I have written. This has only one disadvantage: it is almost impossible to keep families apart. The number of Coorg families is not altogether very enormous; the number which educates its children for Government service is quite small. If you manage to separate the brothers and cousins and nephews, you find yourself tied up hopelessly among the "in-laws." Coorg is the country of adult marriages, and the distaff side of the house carries more weight than is usual in the ungallant East. You get as a result a rather bewildering network of small domestic intrigues, and at times when such are afoot it is uncommonly hard to say for certain whose is the hand that is pulling the ropes. Quite probably it is some one's brother's wife's sister; but these are hard to get at. You will imagine that difficult situations arise—and they do.

I think the Coorgs have justified most of what I have said of them by their attitude towards modern Indian politics. They accept that very nebulous ideal *swaraj*; but as no one on earth knows what that may be, and neither Mr Gandhi nor any one else has ever been

able to define it, that does no great harm. On stupidities such as the non-co-operation movement they turn that stolid front of sound sense which you would expect from a people I have compared to the Highlanders of Scotland. Imagine how the doctrines of Gandhi would go down in Inverness-shire or Ross, and you will see that they would make little impression on Coorg. I said some way back that the Coorg had a passion for putting himself in the hands of political agitators. He will do so in matters like the amalgamation of his province with Madras—which incidentally would be disastrously against his interests, though very pleasant for the Madrassi vakils, who foment most of this agitation. But when it comes to anything like the non-co-operation movement, his innate sense and loyalty come to the rescue, and the agitator makes very little headway. I should be very much surprised if there were ever any serious political trouble in Coorg. If it ever does arise, then Coorg must have been mishandled. That again is a relief—and a very great relief—to the officer stationed in the province. No one wants to be continually issuing injunctions against this and that, or reading the Riot Act, or calling up the military; it is no particular pleasure to any one to be wading through secret police reports about one suspect or another, about this

league or that association every half-hour of the day. Yet that is what district adminis-

tration has come to in too many places in India at this hour.

VII.

If I wished to show Coorg at its best, and could choose one day in the year and one only, I should unhesitatingly pitch upon the day of the Cauvery festival in mid-October and take you up to Tale-Cauvery—Cauveryhead, as we should call it here. Tale-Cauvery is on the top of a hill in the extreme south-western corner of Coorg, and if it is one of the holiest places in South India, it is also one of the most beautiful—which does not by any means follow. You climb to it out of the rice-fields of Bhagamandla by a steep track through Pine forests which leads you presently to bare grassy hills, from which you may look out over such vistas of hill and plain and seaboard as you should not readily forget. The temple of the Source is at the very top—at about the same height as the observatory on Ben Nevis—and outside it there is a little tank. At the temple end of this is an even smaller one, a mere box or well, and here it is that the annual rebirth of the Cauvery takes place, announcing to all that the sun and the forces of life have conquered yet again, and that the dark monsoon is beaten into flight. At a mo-

ment which has been predicted weeks or months beforehand the water in the little well suddenly surges up and flows into the bigger tank, and with that the new year is begun. Do not ask me why or how it does this, for I cannot tell you—nor can any one else; but at the psychological moment, which may be at any hour of the day or night, the water rises, a great volume of shouting goes up to heaven, and the waiting throng crowds down into the tank to bathe. I defy the hardest-hearted sceptic, the most utterly irreligious scoffer, to await that dramatic moment without a beating heart and a wild sense of expectation.

It is a happy day; there is a wonderful geniality everywhere that calls up something of the Dickensian Christmas; but instead of the fog and the snow and the grime, you have the blazing sunshine, the clear mountain air, the delight and freedom of open spaces. I defy you not to love it; start out as dour and surly as you may, the contagion of that glad holiday will lay hold of you. All the way up you will walk among joyful crowds—and here is yet another difference, for your Hindu is like

your Englishman in that he takes his pleasures, and especially his religious pleasures, very sadly,—but your Coorg goes laughing and smiling to his festival. It is a great day for the Coorg ladies, old and young, who dress in their best, which is the most beautiful best in South India. If the Coorg male is the Scots Highlander of South India, his womenfolk are beyond question its Parisiennes. You will see jacket and *sari* arranged in colour-schemes of honey and sage, amber and purple, rose and grey, with the most faultless taste, all crowned with the flowing veil that lends beauty to any head. I have said nothing of the neat prettiness of the Coorg women, but that too is a relief after the gross lusciousness which so often passes for feminine beauty in the East. On your way up to Tale-Cauvery you will doubtless meet Chetty and even Brahman ladies from the hot plains of Tanjore and Madura and Ramnad—making heavy work of the ascent in contradistinction to the tripping agility of the Coorgs, and you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself. I shall be surprised if your opinion is not mine.

In the course of time one goes to many festivals and many temples. But there is something about this radiant smiling day on the Coorg hills that sets it in a class apart. There is something unforgettably delightful, some presence

as it were about the place that is not altogether of earth. If ever one could be converted to a religion that is all pure faith and worship and no argument at all, I really think it would be here.

Looking northward from the hill above Tale-Cauvery you will see another mountain, a stupendous terrible thing of black rock. That is Pushpagiri, and on the top of it there is another old temple—old this time as the ages and older altogether than man's memory. On a spur or buttress of this mountain there lives an immortal saint, who was forced to retire to these solitudes by the misplaced and undesired generosity of the Raja, who pursued him with unacceptable gifts from one resting-place to another. In his present fastness neither Rajas nor any other can disturb him, for it is inaccessible to human foot. Round the temple at the top you may pick up strange little six-sided crystals, like sections of minute basaltic pillars, which are called Shanmugam stones. If a man comes to you with Shanmugam stones which he has gathered on Pushpagiri, you will know that whatever else he has done he has at least accomplished a pretty reasonable climb, for take it by the easiest route you can choose, this is a mountain that does not surrender without a struggle.

On Pushpagiri you stand among the broken peaks of

the Western Ghats—peaks of all shapes and all degrees of savagery. You might well be at the world's end. Yet walk but twelve miles or so back into Coorg and you are in a planters' club on a very tolerable nine-hole golf-course, with a billiard-table and all the amenities of civilisation. That is characteristically Coorg—and nowhere else. The writer of these notes once set out to strike into the wilds, but having done forty miles he found himself within easy reach of two golf-courses and yet another billiard-table. He gave it up in despair. In Coorg you can penetrate into very wild and lonely corners, but corners they are. You cannot go for long without lighting on Coorg houses in a rice valley or the verandahed bungalows of those European exiles who are, in the best sense of the word, perhaps the most perfect sportsmen on earth.

If you come to Coorg you must, of course, see Mercara, because it is the headquarters. If you do not make your visit in the monsoon you will see a very sunny and pleasant little town, whose bungalows command a most glorious prospect to the Ghat Hills. If you come in the monsoon you will find nothing but a black mist and a drenched populace floundering through mud and water. Monsoon or no, you will see two life-size elephants made of plaster and painted black, whose exact origin is rather obscure.

You will see also the tombs of the Rajas modelled to some extent on the Taj Mahal, and you will see that unique erection the fort. The fort—or rather the palace buildings therein—were built by an Italian, and look like a Chinese monastery. Tradition has it that the said Italian is still bricked up in a corner of the wall. You will see the paved yard where prisoners were bolted across while the Raja, sitting in a balcony, made practice at them with a rifle. Those who got safely across went free—but the Raja had the Coorg eye, and I fear these were but few. You will see too the yard that ran with blood on the occasion of one of Viraraja's massacres. Elsewhere you will see young Coorg playing hockey or cricket, and you will realise that if the Raja is gone the Coorg eye still persists. If you have any illusions as to your inborn British superiority at these games, you had better take a hand. You will find yourself, as the racing experts say, "fully extended."

But Mercara is not Coorg, because although it is the headquarters of the province, it is just a *petta* like the others, and is inhabited by *petta* people. To get to the heart of the real Coorg you must penetrate to the other palace—the old grim palace of Nalknad. You can even live in it, for it has been adapted as a rest-house; but you will crack your head a dozen times a day, for the

ceilings were made for little people and the doors are but forehead high. That is a tragic little place—it is only a biggish house really, though tradition dignifies it with the title of “palace”—and its dark rooms and crudely-painted walls could tell some strange stories. It was here that Viraraja married that cherished wife whose death drove him mad with grief: you may still see in front of the palace the little stucco pavilion where he and she sat together upon that happy day. And by an evil sequence of history it was here that the children of his favourite daughter, for whom he had made so many plans, were murdered and thrown into a pit at the bidding of his nephew, Viraraja II. It was in front of this quiet unassuming little house on the day after that monstrous deed that Viraraja and his Dewan walked together discussing whether the unfortunate wretches who had carried out the work—they were jungle tribesmen and people from North Coorg—should not also be despatched and cast into the pit before it was closed. A grim place, and of tragic memories; and surely if ever ghosts walk it should be here. Yet it is a place of serene beauty, nestling under the pedestal of the highest hill in Coorg, surrounded by sweetly-running mountain burns, and in the spring-time of the year decked out with a profusion of coloured foliage that cap-

tures the eye in sheer delight. It is ill to believe that such sad things could have happened here. But that is Coorg again, as has been already said: a chequered past illuminated by glorious deeds, but blotted by hideous stories of evil, by memories of men bad or mad, according as you please, but at least of well-nigh incredible savagery; and as a background to it all, rare natural beauty and the calm domestic life of the fields and farms.

We could go elsewhere in Coorg and never lack for variety, for that is one of the charms of the place—that within its little area it contains so much that differs. We could strike away into North Coorg and climb the cone of Malambi, and look out over the Mysore plains broken by odd hills of rock and stone; or we could go to the east and lose ourselves in the great forests where, with luck, we should see bison and tiger and the herds of wild elephant going about their peaceable affairs. The jungles of Coorg are for a book to themselves. We could solace ourselves with the water-meadows of Fraserpet, or climb to the wind-swept grass plateaux of the Brahmagiris, where the sambhur walk in open solitude; and in the end descend into Malabar by the Saratabbi Falls, which are four hundred feet high, and the great gorge of the Barapole river, which must surely be as fine a piece of scenery on the grand scale as

there is on earth. And I hope that on the way we should forgather with a planter or two and share their sport ; or, again, we should come to a Coorg house nestling among the coco-nuts and areca palms on the marge of a green valley of rice, and there we should be invited to take off our shoes and come inside and seat our-

selves near the south-west pillar of the inner court (which is the place of honour), and partake of that diffident hospitality which is all friendliness and neither self-interest nor ostentation. I know I should enjoy every minute of it, and I venture to predict that so would you.

HILTON BROWN.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

LLOYD GEORGE, AUTOCRAT—OLD AND NEW DIPLOMACY—MR LLOYD GEORGE AND THE TURKISH NATIONALISTS—THE IGNORING OF FETHI BEY—THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DOMINIONS—THE EQUIPMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIST—MINISTERS ON THEIR DEFENCE—THE SPECTACULAR MR LLOYD GEORGE—A KNOT TO DISENTANGLE—A JOY IN STORE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER—FRANCE AND THE ALLIES.

DURING the last four years Mr Lloyd George has aspired to the autocracy of England, of Europe, of the world. He has turned those who should have been his colleagues in the Cabinet into subservient henchmen. He has imposed upon a paid House of Commons the simple duty of registering his decrees. The State is myself, says he with easy effrontery, and while he cares very much what becomes of himself, he cares very little what becomes of the State. Like most men of imperfect imagination, he cannot picture Great Britain, from which he has brutally and wantonly dis severed Ireland, deprived of his governance. Wherever the ship is going—and he is indifferent which course it follows—his own vacillating hand must be at the helm. As he means, so long as he lasts, to be sole unquestioned captain of the ship, he has chosen his officers rather for their obedience than for the qualities of independence and courage. He has been his own Foreign Minister, his own Secretary of War, his own Home Secretary. Above all, he has aimed at the control

of foreign affairs, because he has thought it necessary for his vanity that the eyes of all Europe should be fixed upon him. Wherever he has gone—to San Remo, to Cannes, to Genoa—he has preferred the circus to the conference, because it makes more noise and ensures a bigger advertisement. The danger of his method is now clear to all. He has been sustained only by the valour of ignorance. The knowledge and industry which alone ensure a proper understanding of foreign policies are always denied him. He has blundered on autocratically and unknowingly, until he has set Great Britain in a position of suspected isolation.

For instance, when he went to the Conference in Paris, from which prudence should have withheld him, he thought chiefly of the people at home, or at least he made the people at home an excuse for an obstinately held and generally erroneous opinion. In Mr Owen Wister's book, 'Neighbours Henceforth,' of which more presently, Appendix A gives us at length the discussion, held by the Supreme Council, about Upper

Silesia. If you wish to see how they spoke, who decided for us the destinies of Europe, you cannot find a better specimen of levity. Mr Wilson and M. Clemenceau did not disdain to consider the question on its merits. They recognised that they had already given Upper Silesia to Poland: Mr Lloyd George insisted, in defiance of his own pledges, upon a plebiscite, which he was convinced would be favourable to Poland. He thought the plebiscite would be popular at home. "I must," said he, "have the English people with me in case of trouble." And again: "If the Germans refuse to sign, I must be able to prove that the fault is not ours." When he spoke thus he ignored the simple facts that the English people knew less about Upper Silesia even than he did, and that it was wholly indifferent to its fate. But he could not take his eyes off the ballot-box; he could not help looking at foreign affairs with provincial eyes. So the plebiscite was duly held, and not only were the conditions laid down by the Supreme Council impudently ignored, but the conviction of Mr Lloyd George that the plebiscite would be favourable to Poland was proved baseless. Here, then, is the story of Upper Silesia as set forth by Mr Owen Wister: "First, early in 1919, it is to be given outright to Poland; next, a string is tied to this gift by a plebiscite, at which shall vote only native-born

and residents naturalised before 1st January 1919, and residents exiled by Germany; next, contrary to this signed agreement, German emigrants are to vote; next, these are to vote on a different day from the inhabitants; next, they are to vote on the same day; finally, 1,900,000 of them enter and vote on the same day, and the election is an intimidation and not free, precisely as Clemenceau told Lloyd George it would be, and Lloyd George told Clemenceau he was sure it wouldn't." There we have a good example of Mr Lloyd George's ignorance and obstinacy. He convinced himself that what he wished (or pretended to wish) would happen, and it did not happen. He repudiated, after two years, a treaty which he himself had signed, and then he is surprised that nobody outside his servile Cabinet sets the value of a pin's head upon his word.

So the blight of the amateur is upon every clause of the Treaty of Peace, a treaty which ensures a century of wars and constant repartition. Yet it was not in intrigue that Mr Lloyd George failed. He treated the nations of Europe as he treats his Cabinet—brought them to heel, and managed to get his own deleterious way. There is a passage in Mr A. L. Kennedy's 'Old Diplomacy and New' which we commend to our readers' attention. "It is precisely in the divorce of his acts from his words," writes Mr Kennedy

of Mr Lloyd George, "that has hitherto lain the damaging effect of his diplomacy. England's word used to be her bond. The words of her official spokesmen are not now so considered on the continent of Europe or in the Middle East, where our diplomacy, in the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, has cost us our reputation for good faith, 'hitherto our greatest asset throughout the East.' Our diplomatic credit has been shaken. Financiers explain that the greater the ratio of currency to assets the smaller is the value of the currency unit; an unsupported volume of currency destroys its own efficiency. The lightest warning from Lord Salisbury, the careful understatement of Lord Grey, carried more weight than prodigal protestations from Mr Lloyd George. . . . Diplomacy is long-term business. Prestige is slowly accumulated, as the fame of a banking-house is gradually built up; it brings economy of effort and warless achievement." This prestige Mr Lloyd George has blown to the winds. He has dissipated, roisily, our gradually built-up fame. And having done Great Britain an injury which may be irreparable, he appeals to the British people for fair play! At the coming General Election he will get it.

It has always been his desire to startle the electorate. He has a fervent love of melodrama. For a long while he has been on the look-out for a stirring curtain to bring

down upon the fifth act of his Government. And so he made his sudden onslaught upon the Turkish Nationalists. If there was no real crisis to astonish the voters, he thought he could make one, and he did. As what seemed to him a brilliant stroke of preparation, he listened to the blandishments of MM. Zaharoff and Venizelos, and espoused the cause of Greece. Always a bad prophet, he foresaw in the movement of the Greek Army a certain victory. He encouraged the Greeks as loudly as he could with his voice, filled them with an unjustified confidence, and thus did his best to contrive their defeat. Having promised not to rob Greece of her victory, he lectured and insulted the triumphant Turk. He dragged a rusty sword out of its scabbard and threatened a soldier who was flushed with victory, and cared little enough for the noisy words of Mr Lloyd George. Had Mr Lloyd George known the first lessons of diplomacy, he would have known (1) that it is not wise to insult the man or the power with whom you propose to negotiate; and (2) that you ought not to make claims which you are not strong enough, militarily, to make good. He neglected these rudimentary precautions, proceeded first to insult the Turk, then to suggest a policy which he could never have carried into effect. More than this, he snubbed France by sending what was in truth an ultimatum without consulting her, and

complained that she did not allow herself, without argument, to be dragged along behind his chariot. "France has let us down," said Sir George Younger, and the whole Coalition pretended to be outraged by the separate policy of France. It seems to have occurred to none of them that France has little reason to trust the speeches of Mr Lloyd George. After all, she has not yet let tradition go, and still believes that wisdom and courtesy are part of a diplomatist's equipment.

And there was no reason for all the excursions and alarms by which Mr Lloyd George hoped to dazzle the voters. The freedom of the Straits, whatever that might mean, was not jeopardised. As Mr Arnold Toynbee has pointed out, our Prime Minister declared that the Turkish National Pact "substantially demands that they (the Turks) should have the power to close the Straits." The Turkish National Pact does nothing of the sort. It states, what is reasonable, that the security of Constantinople must be protected from every danger, and that, "provided this principle is assured, whatever decision may be arrived at jointly by us and all other Governments concerned regarding the opening of the Bosphorus to the commerce and traffic of the world is valid." And there was less excuse for Mr Lloyd George's street-corner diplomacy, because Fethi Bey, a member of the Angora Govern-

ment, came to London in the beginning of August with the hope of putting before the British Government a serious proposal, accepted and approved by his colleagues. So little was Mr Lloyd George interested in the matter that he did not receive Fethi Bey, nor did the Foreign Secretary. Indeed, nothing was said officially of Fethi Bey's visit, except that presently Mr Lloyd George issued a document to the London Press explaining that "Fethi Bey was not in London on any business connected with the Near Eastern settlement, and that he had been received at the Foreign Office only in an informal way and as a matter of courtesy by junior officials." If Fethi Bey were not here on business connected with the Near East, we should like to know why he took so long a journey. And was it his fault that he was deemed unworthy of being received by any others than junior officials, and that even this paltry honour was conferred "in a formal way and as a matter of courtesy"?

Thus the stage was set for great events, and one of our heaven-sent governors had the happy thought of despatching ecstatic telegrams to our dominions oversea. This manœuvre had been highly successful at the moment of the Irish surrender. Why should not the Government make profit for itself out of the conspicuous loyalty and high spirit of the dominions? A wickeder step was never taken by an

enfeebled minister. If Mr Lloyd George or Mr Churchill, or whoever was the hero to whom this happy thought came, had wished to lose the support of our kinsfolk, this was the way to do it. Yet a memory of the magnificent response made by the dominions in the Great War might have persuaded the Government to a more decent reticence. To demand aid, so to say, at the sword's point, in a quarrel which was unnecessary and unexplained, is the sure way to lose the regard and support of our gallant friends and cousins. Thus are the methods of the amateur carried to the pitch of ridicule, and we should have marvelled at the telegram even if it had been sent by a rowdy schoolboy.

Mr Lloyd George, then, until the sudden and helpful resuscitation of Lord Curzon, who instantly restored to us the ancient methods of diplomacy, took nobody into his confidence except the Labour Party. He refused to summon the Houses of Parliament; he abstained from consulting his Cabinet. He had no hesitation in listening to the impassioned eloquence of Mr Thomas, and confided to that demagogue and his friends the inmost secrets of his solitary heart. The secrets afforded them little encouragement. The wonder is not what the secrets were, but that they should have been betrayed at all. Mr Lloyd George's colleagues are never tired of telling us that Labour, which they themselves most

wantonly enfranchised, is not fit to rule. Perhaps it is not. But if it be not fit to rule, why is it a fit repository of official secrets? Why should it be Mr Lloyd George's first endeavour always to placate this party of incompetents? The motive, no doubt, is fear. And it is obvious that the privileges which Mr Lloyd George freely confers upon Labour would be sternly withheld from any other party in the State foolish enough to demand them. On all accounts, then, we trust that this is the last that we shall ever hear of the happy-go-lucky autocratic diplomacy of the amateur. The distinction between the old and the new method has been clearly put by Mr Aubrey Herbert, whose wise intervention has done much to restore sanity to our policy. "The objects of the old diplomacy," says he in 'The Times,' "were to obtain peace. Knowledge and good manners were an essential part in the training of the diplomatist — knowledge to make the best of the bargain, manners to avoid friction. The diplomatist was the go-between of the high contending parties. If his knowledge failed or his temper gave way, the harm was not irreparable, for the last word had not been said. Mr Lloyd George has found it more amusing to do his own negotiating. To this work he has unfortunately brought, with regard to the East, prejudices and not knowledge, and if report speaks true, courtesy is not the strongest part of his

autocratic equipment." The distinction could not be more plainly made, and the crisis in the Near East will not have been wholly in vain if it warns Great Britain of the danger which it incurs daily by giving its support to Mr Lloyd George.

The Prime Minister has failed to manage a spectacular curtain, and every hour brings closer the end of the play. A General Election cannot long be deferred, and the politicians who cling obstinately to office, and believe that nothing is of the smallest importance except their own return to power, are sorely distracted. Even the optimists among them are at last discovering that the word Coalition has no charm in the public ear. All over the country the members of the Coalition, Liberals and Conservatives alike, are tacking on to themselves the label of "independents." In vain they deceive us. They are but obeying the behests of the leader into whose pocket they put their consciences four years ago, and hoping that something will turn up to save them. They say, and no doubt believe, that after the General Election a Coalition will still be necessary, and then that those who for a few weeks have boasted of their "independence" will rally round the old flag. In other words, Mr Lloyd George, as they say in the city, will join the board after allotment, and the same weary game of scandal and surrender will continue for another five years. It is not a pleasant prospect for the rest of us, and happily it is a pros-

pect which we do not think will ever become a reality.

Whatever the future holds, it is certain that the present has filled our Ministers with panic fear. They are ready, each one of them, with their apologies. Mr Austen Chamberlain came into the field first, and delivered such an oration as can neither deceive nor persuade anybody. At the very moment of declaring his loyalty to Mr Lloyd George, he pretends to regard himself as the leader of the "Unionist" Party. Had he been blessed with a sense of humour, he would never again permit the word "Unionist" to pass his lips. What does he think of his "Unionism" when he casts his eye towards Ireland, and sees what havoc his treachery to the party, of which he called himself the leader, has wrought in that distressed country? It was his duty to preserve by all means in his power the Union which existed, and which clearly must exist again, between Great Britain and Ireland. And so easily did he sacrifice his duty that he took Michael Collins by the hand. He did more than this: he attempted to involve his father in his own sudden change of view. From that moment Mr Chamberlain disqualified himself for the position to which he clings. It is in no spirit of party that we hope and pray for the end of the Coalition. We have no interest in labels. We desire nothing more than to see the affairs of the Empire honestly and wisely managed. If we had to make a choice

between Mr Lloyd George and Mr Chamberlain, we should, we think, prefer Mr Lloyd George. We know perfectly well what Mr Lloyd George will do. When he took the murderers by the hand, whom he had promised to take by the throat, he acted after his kind. He had given no pledge to Unionism, and if he had, we could have fairly estimated the worth of that pledge. Mr Chamberlain existed for and by Unionism. He had been sent to Parliament by those who professed the doctrine, and he was bound in honour to support his friends. He chose to support the enemies of his friends, and we should have thought better of him if, in the act of renewing his promise of loyalty to Mr Lloyd George, he had tendered his resignation to the Unionist Party.

The arguments which he used to justify his policy are one and all worthless. He tells us that Mr Lloyd George has scrupulously observed the agreement which he made with Mr Chamberlain's predecessor. "He has strengthened the Unionist element in the Cabinet." Has he? How does it profit the country if Mr Lloyd George crams more "Unionists" into his Cabinet, when these "Unionists," as soon as they enter it, are ready to join the murderous Sinn Feiners in their policy of assassination and disruption? We have got to the point when names and titles do not matter. We know well enough what heavy blows Mr Chamberlain and Lord

Birkenhead have struck at the security of the Empire, and we might respect them just a little if they had the courage to call themselves Sinn Feiners, and to acknowledge their natural love of surrender and rebellion.

And again says Mr Chamberlain: "In all the difficulties we have faced, in all the dangers we have encountered and overcome, never once has any question of principle separated Mr Lloyd George and his Liberal friends from my Unionist colleagues and myself." How should it? When neither side knew any principle of any kind, how could Mr Chamberlain be separated by principle from Mr Lloyd George? Opportunity has been the god of their undivided worship, and no sooner did they both embrace the doctrine of Sinn Fein than separation by principle became impossible for them. Henceforth they were not only friends but accomplices, and it is hardly worth mentioning that they are still as thick as thieves. But even if Mr Chamberlain had not gone over to the other side at the very crisis of the battle, he would not be fit to be a leader. He is no leader who, professing to know the end and purpose of the campaign, does his best to ensure its failure. "These are days," says Mr Chamberlain, "when it is our duty to seek to rally the constitutional and conservative elements of the country, to whatever class they belong." That is true enough, but Mr Chamberlain has put it out of his power to rally

these elements. We have no love of the "Unionism" which is rooted in disunion. We will not confide the defence of the constitution to one who has helped to weaken the Empire all the world over, and who has preached a practical sermon from the text that to him who fires a revolver at our unarmed citizens nothing shall be denied.

Having travelled very far in Ireland on the road of revolution, Mr Chamberlain cries halt in England to the policy which he has encouraged elsewhere. Like Mr Churchill and other friends of Michael Collins, he is afraid of the Labour party, and he warns us that if that party comes into power it is not the moderates who will prevail. Messrs Lloyd George and Chamberlain have been in power for years, and at every point they have surrendered to the extremists. The worst of the Labour party could not have done more in Ireland than hand the country over to fire and sword, and leave those who have been loyal to Great Britain to starve or to die. We confess that we are weary of the hypocrisy which without pressure gave every man and woman the vote, and then withdrew in alarm from the consequence of its folly. For the passing of the Franchise Bill of 1917 there was no excuse. It is unhappily too late now to complain that the men and women into whose hands the House of Commons committed the government of the country are unfit to govern.

Mr Lloyd George is nothing if not spectacular, and in his

expedition of defence he showed a better knowledge of drama than Mr Chamberlain. Though the crowds which greeted him were less dense and less noisily enthusiastic than those which acclaimed Charlie Chaplin, his agents in advance did not do their work badly, and many a railway station between London and Manchester was made inaccessible to the busy traveller. When it came to speaking, Mr Lloyd George proved himself, as always, completely lacking in tact. He attacked the Turks, with whom he boasted he had come to an agreement, bitterly and recklessly. He was, as always, impertinent to France, and gave another excuse to that high-spirited nation for hostility to England. For the rest, the speech contained little else than a threat. Impartiality can accept few of its facts, and its sentiment is not likely to affect the softest heart. The threat, for it amounted to a threat, is characteristic. Mr Lloyd George implied that if he went, there was an end of peace and security. He would leave to his successors a very hard knot to disentangle, and he would find a vast satisfaction in their embarrassment. This attitude is neither amiable nor patriotic. The difficulties which will confront a new administration were created for the most part wantonly and carelessly by Mr Lloyd George, and he menaces the country with disaster if any one but himself is permitted to attempt their solution. "It will be an interesting experiment," says he, "to see others trying it.

That is one of the joys I shall have in store." He is careful not to call much attention to Ireland, but no doubt the woes of that country and the tortures daily inflicted upon the loyalists will appeal most loudly to his sense of humour. Now, any other Minister, save Mr Lloyd George, would look upon the ills of his country with sorrow and apprehension, and the sorrow and apprehension would be the greater if those ills had been created by himself, by his reckless experiments, and by his broken promises. But Mr Lloyd George is hardened and impenitent. He has got things, at home and abroad, into a hopeless muddle, and he holds his sides with joyous laughter. And amid the wreckage of his spendthrift policy he still hopes to find a raft of popularity. "I cast myself on the people," says he, no doubt with a useful tremor in his voice, "whose cause I have never betrayed during the thirty-two years of a strenuous life." So humble is he, that he will follow any party which allows him to lead it. He will support with all his might any Government that devotes itself to the pacification of the nations "with single-mindedness, fearlessness, and resolution." A memory of his past will prove how useless his support is. He has insulted Islam, upon whose loyalty our Empire largely depends. He has alienated France and Italy, who once were our warm-hearted allies. He has found his friends among the assassins of Ireland and the

Bolsheviks of Russia. And he dares to speak of the pacification of the nations. There is no security which he could give and we accept. We can only hope, therefore, that he will speedily retire from the position which (he tells us) he never sought, and leave England in peace.

What we want above all is some years of tranquillity, and tranquillity can be attained only by a continuous policy, by a return to the old traditions of political life. We are tired of witnessing "the beatification of a whole people by clap-trap." Above all, the conduct of foreign affairs, delicate and dangerous as it is, must be taken out of the realm of scandal and ignorance. We must get back as quickly as possible to a clear and loyal understanding with France, and this will be possible only when Mr Lloyd George no longer directs the Government of the country. The French are wise enough to make a complete distinction between the English nation and its Prime Minister. They have as much reason to distrust the Prime Minister as they have to trust the nation, which he has bamboozled for the moment. The French and English fought side by side in the war. They shared in the victory over the Germans, and if our civilisation is not to be submerged they must work together in these days of peace. You have but to look at the map of Europe to see that upon France is laid the duty of keeping back the hordes of Huns and other barbarians.

A teutonised Europe would be a calamity which none can face with equanimity. For four long years we averted this calamity, and all the efforts of France and England would be in vain if the idle strident rhetoric of Mr Lloyd George were permitted to separate us from our friends. The position of France to-day is delicate indeed. The Germans, impertinent and ambitious, are the favourites of Mr Lloyd George. Ever since the signing of the peace they have been allowed to do what they like. France's powerful allies, England and America, have made no attempt to exact from Germany the reparations which she was pledged to afford. The disarmament of the Huns is a farce, as it was in Napoleon's time, and there is nothing between Germany and France but an artificial boundary. Moreover, France suffered far more deeply in the war than any of the combatants. Her northern provinces were devastated; her factories were destroyed by the Germans, who feared her rivalry in time of peace; and Mr Lloyd George, to the natural distress of France, has spoken at times of Germany with tenderness in his voice. Not content with befriending Germany, our governors have reproached France with militarism, with idleness, with a disinclination to be taxed. But they have not offered to restore her ruined provinces, and they have taken care that Germany should still be protected from the carrying out of the articles of the Treaty.

Neither England nor America can congratulate herself on the policy which they have both pursued towards France. They have forgotten too soon that at the outset France stood almost alone between them and disaster. If it is true that England lost no time in sending out her Expeditionary Force, and bent all her energies to the prosecution of the war, America, whose stake was as great, came late into the war and went early out of the peace. Nor has she shown any more sympathy with France in her subsequent distress than has England. It is not unnatural, therefore, that France should regard America with irritation, and that America, when her self-satisfaction gives her time to think, should repay France with the dislike which is always inspired by the consciousness of wrong-doing. All those who are interested in the relations which exist between France and America should read Mr Owen Wister's 'Neighbours Henceforth' (London: Macmillan & Co.) That the two countries should have been friends as well as allies was almost impossible. The Americans are apt to consider Europe a sort of idiot child, whom the sons of the West can just tolerate out of the generosity of their hearts. The French may be forgiven if they thought their visitors a trifle crude. Nor were particular causes of offence lacking. The Americans were of opinion that, as they had come over to "save" Europe, all things should have been made

easy for them. They looked for bouquets, and they were confronted with high prices, which made them very angry. The French, on the other hand, raged furiously against those who thought it no wrong to collect "souvenirs." There is a house in France of the sixteenth century—to give but one instance—which, until the Americans came, had never lost a key. In a single day the house was stripped of keys. Is it strange that the French, knowing nothing of this familiar habit of the Americans, should have bitterly resented their theft? Again, it was difficult for the French, unused to what Mr Wister describes admirably as "uplifters," to endure the priggish counsel and interference of these philanthropists, as any one will acknowledge who reads Mr Wister's witty chapter entitled "Uplift." But these stumbling-blocks on either side are small enough. The real obstacle to a quick and rational friendship was and is the native immodesty of the Americans. It was hard for men who had been fighting for nearly four years, who had borne with resignation the heaviest losses of life and land, to be told lightly that they were being "saved" by the Americans. It is harder still, now that the war is over, to hear that America came to the rescue of France "after England failed." This boastfulness, which has afflicted us for four years, is sufficient to break the steadiest friendship, and France, and England too, may be easily forgiven if they have

resented it with bitterness. We know on this side of the Atlantic precisely what the services are which the Americans rendered us. We have no desire either to underrate them or to overrate them. Only we do not wish to abase ourselves before others when we know what work we have done ourselves and what grave sacrifices we have made.

However, nothing but good should be done by Mr Owen Wister's temperate statement, even if the politicians of his country are as obtuse as ours. He has painted a moving picture of the devastated areas, and he has shown to us the spirit of courage in which the French are meeting their own disasters and the lack of sympathy of the others. He asks you to put yourself in her place, and thus tells the story of her recent experience: "One fourteenth of her territory devastated, four million men lost in killed, maimed, and wounded, a frontier renounced for a broken promise; the German damages awarded her by the court whittled down under British pressure while the German fleet is safe in the British pocket; her demand at Washington to increase her own greatly-reduced sea-power skillfully distorted by the press. Her naval plan was held up to the world as an enormity, when, in fact, after the cobwebs of misrepresentation had been brushed away, what she asked was very close indeed to what Mr Hughes proposed." In spite of Mr Wister's optimism, we cannot expect much

help for France from the American Government. Her best hope for the future lies in the speedy disappearance of Mr Lloyd George from public life.

We had written so much when the glad tidings came that the Coalition was at an end. The malign eloquence of Mr Lloyd George, the tortuous apology of Mr Austen Chamberlain, were shown to be but the prelude to a happy resignation. We can do no more for the moment than express our profound relief. A burden has been taken from our backs which it was becoming impossible to bear. The retirement of Mr Lloyd George means, at any rate for the moment, a return to clean politics and an end of trickery. We may at last look our Allies in the face without the fear of encountering their suspicion. We may cherish a hope that England's pledged word may once more be accepted as something better than an evasion. The country needs nothing more than a period of calm and

security. It is tired of diplomatic circuses and the performances of a Welsh magician. In the craft of politics there is no room for wizards. With so great a cunning has Mr Lloyd George drawn a feather over the eyes of Lord Balfour and Mr Chamberlain that these eminent politicians still profess to believe that in handing over Ireland to murder and anarchy they have done no violence to the principle of Unionism. That kind of self-deception is now impossible. Henceforth we shall have a chance of knowing what is happening at home and abroad; an end will, we hope, be put to wild adventures in Palestine and elsewhere; and a belated attempt may be made at last to cure the world of the wounds which were dealt it in the war. So we take farewell of Mr Lloyd George "with tears of humble gratitude," to use Southey's words, and we devoutly pray that we may never again entrust the safety of our Empire to hands, fumbling and perilous, such as his.

NOTE.—In the article entitled "THE DEFENCE OF ABADDEH," by Sir Percy Sykes, which appeared in the October number of 'Maga,' it is stated that the relief of that town saved Isfahan from being looted. Actually this danger had been averted by the skilful action of the British Consul-General some days before the relief of Abadeh. The statement was based on a telephone message, which was evidently misunderstood.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXXVI. DECEMBER 1922.

VOL. CCXII.

VANITY SQUARE.

BY LESLIE GORDON BARNARD.

ONLY yesterday I stood outside the railing, now grown rusty with neglect, and watched the preliminary attempts at demolition following a protracted period of disuse. As I leaned upon a familiar gargoyle still decorating what is left of the gate, and watched the weed-grown space about the long-dried-up fountain crushed beneath alien feet, I felt as though a sacred thing had fallen upon irreverent times.

Even as I looked, a great shock of red hair preceded a pugnacious face from out an upper window exactly opposite, and the owner of the face vented a raucous cry—

“’K out below there! Mind yer heads!”

And down crashed débris of wood and plaster that must surely have come from the very quarters that were once the pride of the Major him-

self. A cloud of dust arose, to settle presently in a new white layer upon the powdery accumulations of years that had gathered in every nook and crevice, not forgetting the more lowly lodgings underneath Number 12, where the leaded windows of Number 12A had of old shone spotless through the orders of Emmaline and the efforts of her husband, James—more commonly known as “Slim.”

If you should happen to pass by and look for the name, you may find a scarcely-decipherable legend cut into the stonework of the gable-end of Number 12, bearing the words “Waverley Court.” But to those of us who occupied the twelve apartments that formed three sides of a square—the front railing making the fourth—and who were ministered to in a janitorial way by Emmaline Foddleton and her spouse,

and who paid a generous rent to the Major, as forerunner of the modern apartment house landlord—to us, I say, it will live in memory as “Vanity Square.”

The tale I have to tell gathers itself around that strange and unforgettable period during which the place came to bear this interesting nickname.

I.

It was, I well remember, a drizzling foggy October day. For hours a ceaseless down-pour had been at work, filling the inequalities of the pavements for the feet of the unwary, turning the carpet of leaves under such trees as still struggled against the destructive utilitarianism of civic growth into a soggy carpet. By evening the thought of dry clothes and a warm fire was a sweet morsel to roll under the tongue of anticipation. From my study window I watched the incomers to the Court, sloshing their way through rivulets that flowed across the walks and made the jerky bubbling of the miniature fountain seem a thing of superfluity. I almost envied these home-comers the pleasant contrast that lay before them. From nearly every window lights gleamed in welcome, shining out upon the compact squareness of the Court, barren now that frost had nipped the few growing things, gleaming in its black wetness.

There came familiar figures: Miss Corneroy and her sister, Patience—the former coming from her carriage with a supreme disregard for the slop-

piness of the way, Miss Patience following on with a careful picking of her steps that emphasised, in a way that touched one's humour, the difference between the two; Gadwick, the lawyer, more stooped than ever as he hunched under his collar, and hurried for the welcoming bachelor portals of Number 10, his little black bag protruding from under the cape-like waterproof he wore; later, the Major himself, disdaining the wet as much as Miss Corneroy the elder, a tall spare figure, stiffly erect, giving the impression of one who had seen weather in his time, and was not to be affected by a little drizzle such as this.

The Major did not proceed directly to his own door—Number 7—but stopped, it seemed, for a word with the janitor. Presently, from out the low doorway of Number 12A I saw Slim Foddleton come—an attenuated figure topping even the Major by a matter of inches. He was hatless, and scarcely clad for such weather. In the oblong of light that was the door, his wife, Emmaline, stood, her rotund little figure clearly silhouetted. She seemed

to be waving a protest after her man—probably in the matter of clothes,—James was a terribly dependent creature that way; but when the men disappeared out the gateway into the dusk I saw her lean forward with a curiosity that must have cost her a wetting under the drip of the eaves.

Beyond the railing the lights of a cab gleamed. There came from the gateway presently

not two figures but three. A great bundled-up figure in the centre depended, as though in weakness, upon the support of the Major and Slim. They half carried him through the pillared portals of the Major's own dwelling, and the door was shut.

Across the way Emmaline's form was regretfully withdrawn, and foggy darkness descended again upon a deserted courtyard.

II.

Recent discovery, in unearthing the remains of prehistoric apartment house systems, may have robbed the owner of "Waverley Court" of the mantle of an originator, but at least the Major was a generation ahead of his time in this matter. Also, while the place was not the highly-developed apartment idea with which we are afflicted in these days, it possessed advantages and home-like features that the latter denies, and was admirably adapted to the needs of the type of residents it held.

With the exception of the Major and myself—and an occasional complainant strictly on business—few of the dwellers in "Waverley Court" entered the janitor's quarters under Number 12. The Major went frequently, of course, for purposes of conference; I—without reproach from my neighbours—because an author is to some a being apart, and must

be permitted the indulgence of mingling with all sorts and conditions of men for the purpose of his craft. As a matter of strict truth, it was something within me—probably a plebeian strain—that sent me often to No. 12A to smoke an evening pipe or two and chat with Emmaline and Slim. Candidly, I found it much more diverting than Miss Corneroy's everlasting card-parties and musicales, or even the Major's occasional evenings. Perhaps an added vein of curiosity sent me after dinner that October night to the low leaded glass doorway opposite.

As soon as I entered I knew, by the pungent odour of his favourite brand of tobacco, that Marty Connolly was on one of his regular visits. Marty, being only a decade away from the Ould Land, admitted Hibernian birth, and with pride, but his citizenship was now concerned with the heavenly

regions of the political stamping-grounds of the land of his adoption. Some day Marty was to hold a large place in the councils of the people, distributing patronage with a lavish hand; meanwhile, until the summons of the *vox populi* reached his ears, he made shift with driving the proletariat in his hack, extending his good offices frequently and remuneratively to the dwellers in "Waverley Court." One night a week at least he and his beast rested.

"Come in, sir, and welcome." Emmaline led me into the tiny living-room, where a smoky hearth did its best to compete with Marty's pipe. "I was just making so bold as to s'y that if Mr Brannington couldn't make nothing h'out of it no one could."

"'Tis the truth of the matter she speaks, sor," said Marty deferentially, "being entoiely flummoxed the lot of us." He described a circle with his great red hand. Emmaline nodded briskly; Slim pulled at the straggly reddish moustache that curved downward each side his mouth, and shook his head as though to say it was beyond him,—Slim was by all odds the most morose and dejected creature I have ever met outside the covers of a book.

"Then it's this way, sor," continued Marty, prodding a new charge of tobacco home with a vigorous forefinger; "to-day the Major sends for me, his face very set and

determined. 'Droive,' says he, 'droive like the divil to this address.' And droive I did—down into a boardin'-house district where the doors are cheek-by-jowl, and drew rein before one of 'em. The Major wint in. Before long out he comes again, and beside him a young man the dead spit av him, only fresh and vigorous wid youth.

"'Tis yer last chance,' says the lad, and the face av him wint to me heart. 'I've humbled myself before you for her sake,' he says. 'You have three hours to think it over. We'll come then to the only place that should welcome her in a new land.'

"Says the Major, terrible grim, 'You—you needn't come.' But maybe the lad could see the foight that I saw in the Major's face, for he says again, 'Three hours from now. Three hours to think it over. Dad,' says he, laying a hand sudden-like on the Major's shoulder, 'there's a devil of hate struggling in me. I've fought it all these months—don't feed it. I—I need yer help, dad,' he says.

"Thin the Major just climbed into the keb without so much as a word. 'Droive,' says he, 'droive like the divil to the "Mariner's Rest."'

"Well, sor, to make a long story short, we drove down by the docks, and in wint the Major, and out he came wid a seafarin'-lookin' man wid a face like death. I noticed the folks there sort o' shrank away, and

wan ould wizened-up fellow in a pea-jacket says somethin' in the Major's ear. 'Fiddlesticks!' says the Major, and helps the man wid the face av death in. 'Fiddledee!' he says; 'I've seen these things before, and know what's what! Home, Connolly,' he says, and back I come, and the rest I guess you know as well as I do. Now, what's the answer to it all?' "

Perhaps I should not have shared with these simple folk the thing which was common property in the Court, but it seemed then the natural thing to do. They listened characteristically: Emmaline with quick nods of her chubby head, and occasional murmurs of, "There, now, who'd believe it?"; Slim, his legs curled about the lower part of the chair he occupied, his big hand tugging at the ends of his drooping moustache; Marty alternately frowning and smiling to show how quick was his perception of the salient points, and everlastingly pulling at his short-stemmed pipe.

The estrangement between Major Cornwall and his son was, I say, common property, but the reason of it all was surrounded with some doubt. This much we knew, that the pride of the Cornwalls was a fierce and stubborn thing; that years back some disruption had occurred that had put the ocean between two branches of the family; that the son who had come to fill the Major's life—after the death

of the mother—with a real passion of feeling, had set ablaze again the smouldering volcano of hatred. It was perhaps, for youth, a natural thing to make light of any traditional differences that had split a family all these years, and when Ronald, on a fateful European trip, picked from the Cornwall stock across the water the girl who was to be his wife, the fierceness of the Major's wrath must have come as a shock. The Major had wired a remonstrance on receipt of the news; opposition took at last all normal urging out of it, brought it to the point of an ultimatum. Ronald might choose between the girl and his father. Ronald had chosen—had remained this while, indeed, in England with the thought of settling down.

This much I knew—and told them briefly. Singularly it was another point that roused Emmaline's ire.

It was hinted, I told them, that social standing entered into it too. The girl, it seemed, was earning her living in a London store when Ronald met her. Miss Corneroy had stressed the point when the matter was spoken of, offering it as a mark in the Major's favour. Even Miss Patience echoed it timidly, but then that might be because the Major's defence was the thing nearest to her heart.

Emmaline's bright little eyes blazed as I mentioned these things.

"There, now," she declared, "if that isn't stubborn pride

as ever was. And this a free an' democratic country as they s'y."

"Come off," interposed Marty scornfully; "it's not so much the Major's fault as the blood that's in the man—him havin' descinded from them dratted English aristocrats, bad cess to 'em."

Emmaline experienced a quick change of front. Three years on this side of the ocean had not erased the traditions of a lifetime.

"Garn," she retorted; "h'aristocrats is h'aristocrats on both sides the h'ocean. And there's good ones and bad ones. James, don't sit there like a blinkin' mummy and 'ear the institootions of yer native land run down."

Slim shook a morose head.

"I don't 'old with these 'ere h'aristocrats," he said. "Wot did I ever get out'n 'em? Didn't I s'y to that perisher, Lord Lumley, arter cleanin' 'is blinkin' stibles for better'n a year an' 'e fires me for takin' a drop too much and forgettin' to feed 'is favourite mount, 'My Lord,' I says respectful, 'kind 'earts is more than

coronets, my Lord,' I says, and the blighter just looked at me, and twisted the little rat-tail of a moustache he wore. 'You don't tell me,' he drawls. 'I'm sorry to disappoint you in the matter,' he says, 'but you see my simple faith in you is gone.' Arter that I allus says, 'You can take yer perishin' dooks and earls and lords—I've no use for 'em.'"

"Serve you jolly well right," affirmed his spouse; "but if there's a place on God's round h'earth that's got more vanity an' pride to the square h'inch than this same 'Waverley Court,' my nime ain't H'Emmaline Foddleton—as was H'Emmaline Boggs. If I 'ad my w'y, I know right well wot I'd call it. Vanity Square—that's wot—just like the fellow wot wrote the book."

"You mean," I ventured, "Vanity Fair?"

"Fair or Square," retorted Emmaline, nettled and a trifle red, "h'its all the sime. Vanity Square I calls it. 'Ullo, who's that?" The bell was ringing furiously. "'Ow these 'ere tenants do try a body."

III.

It was, however, a stranger who rang so impatiently that night—a stranger to all of us except Marty, whose whispered aside to me revealed the young man who entered as the son of the Major.

"Is Major Cornwall not at

home?" he inquired quickly. I caught in the flash of the dark eyes, in the imperiousness of the tone, in the tilt of the rather finely-modelled head, in the nervous thinnish mouth, the family resemblance. "There's a light there, but no one answers."

"'E should be in, sir," opined Slim Foddleton.

"Does he live alone?"

"Yes, sir. The missus an' I 'tend to his things, and H'Emmaline she cooks for 'im. 'E 'as a visitor with 'im just now."

"Well, perhaps you'll be good enough to see if you can rouse him now. I have a lady waiting outside."

James Foddleton left us. Emmaline and Marty crowded to the doorway; more discreetly, from the window, where a curtain sheltered, I viewed the proceedings.

Afterwards Slim supplied details from which the fog and the wall partitioned me off.

It seems that the Major, responding to Slim's stridently respectful shout from below stairs, appeared on the staircase. The light on a newel post gleamed strangely upon a grim set face.

"Some one to see you, sir?" ventured Slim.

"The—doctor?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Tell him I can see no one."

"He has a lady with him."

Growing impatient, the young man in the doorway made his way in.

"Go back," commanded the Major sternly; "you can't come up."

"Dad—I have Letty here. She's tired and wet, and hasn't a soul in town to call a friend—none this side the water. She knows nothing of our—differences. She's looking forward to your welcome."

"Tell her I'm sorry"—the Major's face was very grim just then—"but I'll have to postpone that pleasure. Tell her I have a sick man on my hands to care for."

A sudden fierce anger came upon the Major's son.

"Yes," he sneered; "tell her anything to get rid of her. I'll tell her no lies. I'll tell her the truth—that my father has no spark of humanity to be fanned into flame by a simple appeal to decency, that he's forgotten all sacred obligations, trampled under foot everything but his arrogance and pride—that he's raised a devil of hatred in his own flesh and blood!" A little more soberness touched his speech. The meaning of it all must have come to him. He said gravely, "I guess that ends it, dad. I'm sorry."

The Major's lips were twisting. Few men had dared to give the lie to his words. The struggle of emotions contorted his face. In the end the darkness of pride won.

"Go, then," he said at last.

"I'll go," said the lad. "And I'll never come to you again—not if you implore me on your knees with your dying breath! You can blame yourself for it."

They parted with a final facing of each other—the one at the top, the other at the bottom of the staircase. The same dark eyes looked into replicas of their own, the same chin uptilted to chin, the same stubbornness finding its immovable equal.

Ronald turned to go.

For just a second the Major's stiffness went; involuntarily it seemed his hands went out in appeal.

But the lad was gone. Out in the courtyard he was silent with a terrible silence that one might well pray for words—however harsh—to break.

He went to the carriage. Two minutes later he returned to Number 12A with the girl—this wife of his. What a care-free little thing she was—one of those naturally bubbling natures that find joy where others might not, yet without being superficial. Something about the deep neutral-tinted eyes, the long dark lashes, the high clear forehead, the firm rounded chin, spoke of reserves of character, I thought.

"What a fussbox you are, Ronnie," she laughed. "Don't look so upset. Poor Major; he probably feels as badly as we do—and I think it's jolly decent of him to look after this sick friend." So Ronnie had not told her the "truth" yet!

He said shortly, "You don't mind if my wife stays and gets warmed up a bit and dried out, do you? I'll be back as soon as possible."

"He's gone to try and get lodgings," explained the girl; "we foolishly gave ours up this afternoon, although we never suspected, of course, anything like this. Ronnie's been wanting me to meet his father. What a cosy place you have here!"

"Not too bad, mam, as plices go." Emmaline was obviously pleased.

"There, I knew as soon as I saw you,"—Mrs Cornwall clapped her hands in delight—"you come from dear old London too."

"Indeed yes, mam—down Lime'ouse w'y—that's me 'ome. My 'usband, too—meet the lidy, James." Emmaline, having started, proceeded on her introductory course. I had been about to leave, but I must confess I was interested and rather captivated by our little visitor. Conversation became general and democratic.

Slim went out presently to see to the Major's needs. We had seen the doctor's figure pass on the way in a little while before.

In two minutes Slim was back, his eyes agog, his mouth agape, his reddish moustache almost stiffened with horror out of its tendency to droop.

"I mustn't s'y nothink to no one," spluttered Slim—"not a thing to nobody. Oh, Gawd!"

"James Foddleton!" Emmaline shook the apparition vigorously. "What ails you, man?"

"'Tis crazy the man is," suggested Marty, who had been a much intrigued witness of it all.

"Nothink to nobody, so there won't be a panic or nothink!"

"A panic?" repeated Emmaline. "Speak, you fool!"

"Nothink to nobody," reiterated Slim, shaking his head

dazedly, as though to clear his brain, "until they've shut us all in!"

"Shut us all in?"

Slim nodded lugubriously. "Until we're quarantined."

"Quarantined?" It was my turn to stare.

"Nothink to nobody," reaffirmed Slim; "but it don't matter, for we'll all be dead soon!" Slim added in a sepulchral whisper, looking about as though the dread visitor was already on the threshold, "The

sick toff up in the Major's has the plague."

Marty sprang up with an oath.

"I guess I'll go. I've got a business to keep goin'."

But the medical man had forestalled all attempts at escape. A bland, imperturbable, brass-buttoned figure already patrolled the sidewalk outside the railing that fronted our little square. Even Marty's glib Hibernian tongue failed of impression. The quarantine had taken effect.

IV.

The memory of the council of war that was held in Miss Corneroy's next morning is still vividly in my mind. Why it was summoned there no one knew, except that Miss Corneroy felt herself to be the leader now that the Major was shelved by circumstance. On one side of the room stood Miss Patience, very white and terrified; Gadwick, the lawyer, accepting the situation with silent resignation, together with the other residents of the Court—folk of respectable averages, childless married couples, a bachelor of uncertain years. On the other side, as though conscious of the gulf between, and betraying evidences of extreme nervousness—all except Marty, to whom probably a vote was a vote, whether in the hands of the latest garlic-consuming citizen by naturalisation or the most fastidious person alive—stood the group

from Emmaline's: Emmaline herself, wisping her dress with trembling fingers; Slim, more draggly-moustached than ever, and with eyes that bore the patient resignation of one condemned to death and determined to see it through as uncomplainingly as he had a life of injustice and oppression; Mrs Cornwall, very composed and interested, and myself beside her, because I wished to bridge the embarrassing chasm so that the little girl might not suspect the real state of affairs as far as she was concerned.

"The doctor informs me," said Miss Corneroy in her characteristically decisive tones, "that with due precautions we need apprehend no great danger. Discomfort, yes—but no danger. The Major has undertaken the duty of nursing this—this individual whose coming has threatened us.

There is no need that we should lend assistance. Enough that one life should be jeopardised. It is only right the Major should bear the burden; it was thoughtless, incredibly, criminally thoughtless, of Major Cornwall to expose us to this chance which even we must run."

"My dear!" Miss Patience ventured the protest. Two little spots of red touched her cheek, partly due to this unnatural defiance of her sister, partly, we told ourselves, because of the betrayal it involved in Miss Patience's mind, whose devotion to the Major was nevertheless common property.

"Criminally thoughtless!" reiterated Miss Corneroy. "And such a rough kind of a person they say to bring to 'Waverley Court.' I cannot understand the Major."

"I think it rather fine of Major Cornwall." All eyes turned to Letty Cornwall, including those of Miss Corneroy. The woman's chin suffered a considerable elevation; something very like contempt showed in her eyes.

"Oh!" said Miss Corneroy

icily. "Indeed! Perhaps this young woman would like to assist in the nursing?"

I think we all jumped a little when a new voice spoke from the doorway. It was not altogether the surprising fact that he had managed to elude the guard and get in; it was more something in the tone.

"You need not discuss that," said Ronald Cornwall; "neither my wife nor I will have any part in this affair. It is Major Cornwall's affair."

Even Miss Corneroy seemed astounded at the tone.

"The Major," she said slowly, "is your father."

"The Major," returned Ronald coldly, "is nothing to me!"

I felt the girl beside me shrink back from the revelation, but Ronald could not have seen. It occurred to me then that the devil of which he had spoken had come to take possession of him heart and soul. I wondered if this sunny-dispositioned child—for so she seemed to me—he had taken for his wife would be able to exorcise that demon from within him.

V.

Those were trying days in Vanity Square—and you may read a double meaning into the adjective. Under such circumstances one grows to know his fellow-victims more intimately, perhaps, than in months of commonplace existence—self-revelation, willy-nilly, lending

aid. It fell to my lot to see more of Ronald and his wife than the others did, for I opened my place to them, and they were glad enough to accept the hospitality. Ronald seemed to pull himself into his shell and be content with such goodly fellowship as my rows and

stacks of books afforded. Letty Cornwall, on the contrary, became the life of the place. To an old bachelor like myself she was one of those flashing revelations that sometimes come to shake the serenity of one's choice of single blessedness, giving one pause, setting the heart beating out the question of what might have been!

The girl, I say, became the life of the place. It was Letty who settled, with the wisdom of a Solon, a domestic breach between Slim and Emmaline, whose nerves were admittedly "all on a h'edge"; it was Letty who won the everlasting thanks of Gadwick the lawyer, by rearranging a library that had got quite out of hand; it was Letty who sat for hours, literally, listening to Marty's political aspirations, and drawing him out about his family waiting for him back home, and showing a knowledge of everyday folk that made Marty declare if "it weren't for the little lady 'tis dead av the blues an' lonesomes I'd be"; it was Letty who restored confidence when a young married couple feared that the plague was upon them, and Letty diagnosed the case rightly, and with superb assurance, as a common or garden variety of biliousness consequent upon unusually sedentary living; it was Letty to whom, when evening shadows brought vague unrest and terror, Miss Patience fled, confiding all her troubles, and whispering, while the light

in her eyes was not just the reflection of firelight glow, the secrets of romance that had not died with youth.

We noticed, though, that Miss Patience never asked Letty Cornwall to her place. So it came about that Miss Patience, falling ill through worry, took to her bed, and Letty went without hesitation to see her.

She came out five minutes later, and her face, usually a thing of lovely colouring, was white as death; her lips were thin and set, her eyes misty.

Her simple confession that night beside my hearth lingers in my mind as something very fine. Ronald was shut up in the library reading, and occasionally pacing the room, as we had heard him do the last day or so.

"Miss Corneroy was—unkind—this afternoon?" I asked her.

"Perhaps we should not blame her," she said after a space. "I think it is her up-bringing that's at fault. You see—Ronald did not tell me—all—about his father not wanting us to come. This afternoon Miss Corneroy told me—everything."

"Everything?"

"About Major Cornwall's feelings towards me. She mentioned my being just a—working girl. It's quite true, you know, Mr Brannington, but I can't think that's the real reason. I feel she has something against me herself. She doesn't want me to go to see Miss Patience."

I muttered some things un-

complimentary to the woman. Letty Cornwall smiled up at me quickly, shaking her head.

"You mustn't think so badly of her," she told me. "You see, she resented my wanting to do anything for her sister when she was there. Miss Corneroy is very capable." After a time she added, "I'm sorry for her."

"And—the Major?" The question would come out.

She said shakily, "I'd rather not talk about — him — just now!"

It seemed to me that she was listening to the uneasy paces of Ronald in the next room, falling upon the hardwood floors, alternately muffled in the rugs—of this boy-husband of hers into whose eyes had come a strange hardness, into whose heart had come the devil of the family pride.

VI.

During those days none passed in or out of the Court save the doctor, who submitted himself to some process of fumigation each time, it seemed. To my lay mind it has always seemed incredible that the medical profession should fail to drum up business in their rounds from place to place, introducing the symptoms of one to another patient! The tradespeople, leaving their wares gingerly within the gate for the attention of Slim—who seemed to feel a sense of daily miracle that constant research of his person revealed no fatal swellings or other symptoms described in the encyclopedia O-R that he borrowed from me—fled as though a devil lurked in the courtyard. Curious folk came often to stare, from a respectful distance, at the yellow sign that hung by the gate, and longer at the grey stone fronts of the apartments as though expecting some rash to break out upon

their dignified exteriors. If I speak of this time as though it were a long siege, it is because the few days, comparatively, it covered seemed to possess themselves of more hours than the allotted twenty-four, and every minute to tick its way at half-speed through the seconds.

I cannot recall which day it was that the doctor came to my door asking for Ronald Cornwall, but I can vividly remember Ronald's boyish form silhouetted in the open doorway. Above, on the stairs, Letty Cornwall and I stood, intuitively waiting for the pronouncement.

"I'm sorry to tell you, Mr Cornwall," said the medical man gravely, "that the news from Number 7 is not good this morning."

Ronald said nothing. I think he knew what was coming.

"The patient is recovering nicely, thanks to excellent nursing," went on the doctor;

"but I'm afraid your father—the Major——"

"Well?" Ronald was cold and statuesque still.

"That your father has contracted the plague!"

Letty Cornwall gripped my arm. I felt a quick contraction of my heart; somehow just then all the sterner side of the Major was forgotten, and all his lovable qualities came to stir me strangely, not least of all this last great sacrifice of his.

We went downstairs—Letty and I. Out in the courtyard in the crispness of a cold sunny autumn morning the inhabitants of "Waverley Court" began to assemble. Some almost telepathic sense of foreboding brought them down, awakened, I fancy, by the sight of the doctor and Ronald, white-faced, on the threshold of my place. Even Miss Corne-roy, forgetting for the nonce her dignity, was there, strangely attired, Miss Patience at her side, depending upon the comfort of her arm.

The doctor explained it all, counselling calmness.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I must ask for a volunteer to nurse these two patients." We all saw that he was looking straight at Ronald. The workings of the boy's face were unforgettable. I felt his wife's hand trembling on my arm. She gave a little sigh—it seemed to me of mingled relief and resignation—when Ronald's face cleared.

"You think that I——" he

began. A moment later I cursed the doctor for a fool.

"Fine!" he cried. "The Major will be mightily pleased. He sent word"—the doctor lowered his voice to shut out listening ears—"that he would forgive everything if you came to him."

Ronald started; he said tensely—

"Forgive everything? Forgive my marrying the best little girl on earth?" Just for a moment the softening influence of that thought showed, then he swept on to the inevitable climax. "Forgive? I'm glad you told me that. Go back—and tell the Major to recall my words,—that I'd never come to him—not if he implored me with his dying breath!" His voice, unconsciously, had been raised, reaching the white-faced circle about. He did not seem to see us there; he spoke now as though the Major were there before him. "Good God, Major—what a devil you've raised in me!" His voice broke, he turned abruptly and went within, slamming the door behind him.

We stood out there looking at each other, held in a grip of silence. The doctor said at last, "I must have a nurse—will some one offer?"

Before my own offer could find birth, Miss Patience spoke timidly—

"I'll go, doctor—please!"

"Nonsense!" said Miss Corne-roy. "Fiddlesticks!"

"It is my—right!" I had

never seen Miss Patience more defiant or more lovely. She repeated, "My right."

"Patience!" Miss Corneroy was exasperated. "Not another word about it. How ridiculous!"

Then it was that Miss Patience let the traditions of a lifetime extinguish that brave little spark of defiance and sacrifice—and love. Often afterwards she confessed to me that it haunted her persistently,—that she should have failed

him in his hour of need—failed him not merely because of her sister's opposition, but because she was afraid.

It was at that moment that I realised one of our number had slipped away. The upstairs window of Number 7 opened, and a little figure appeared. We all stared up, agape. Letty Cornwall was looking down from that house of deadly plague, smiling bravely at the upturned faces of the watchers.

VII.

To some it may seem strange that delirium should so quickly seize upon the Major—that even before Letty slipped unobtrusively away upon her mission of mercy he had gone down the strange road where phantoms flit and the abnormal holds sway; but the plague, as much as any malady, has its vagaries. Its swiftness is not least of all its terrors.

The doctor came out after a while with a list of her personal needs in his hand, and something about his face that gave his words meaning.

"God bless all true women," he said. To me he confided, "He's calmer already, but, funny thing, he calls her Patience."

I went with him to seek Ronald and to secure the articles required. Ronald said nothing when we told him. His face underwent no perceptible change. It seemed that the

lines had hardened beyond the possibility of that. He came out presently with a black bag in his hand, containing the requirements. The doctor held out his hand for it. Ronald walked by as though he did not notice him. The medical man said sharply, "Here, give me those. I'll look after them."

Ronald said nothing. The doctor intercepted him.

"Get out of my way!" said Ronald, and pushed on.

"Don't be a fool, man! It'll only worry her if you're there. I order you——"

"Get out of the way!" said Ronald again, and pushed forcibly past.

We watched him go then, down the steps and across the courtyard—and so into the house of plague. I thought of it then as a sort of triumphal march—love triumphing over pride—with self fighting vainly all the way. Afterwards I

knew that, partly at least, I was wrong.

If I were writing fiction rather than setting down the facts as I know them, there are points that might be cleared up more effectively. As it is, I must stick to those things I saw or heard. From the doctor came news that all was going well. Both patients were recovering nicely—the worst was over—but the Major's mind was still rambling. His previous worry, his choleric outbursts, had not fortified him physically for such a visitation as this.

It was on towards evening of the day on which the doctor brought this cheering word that Miss Patience came to me, entering with great hesitation across my bachelor's threshold—an offence against her principles of maidenly modesty that I am convinced nothing but desperation could have induced. She sank, with a little sigh, into a chair by my hearth, then thought better of it, and sat on the extreme edge as a seeming concession to the proprieties.

"Mr Brannington—you'll think it strange—my coming like this—but I had to speak to some one or go mad!"

"My dear Miss Patience," I assured her, "I am honoured."

"You see," she hastened on, "I've learned through the doctor that he thinks—the Major, I mean—that I've been nursing him. I wouldn't want him to think—by - and - by when he knows the real case—that I

was a coward. But I wasn't quite that, Mr Brannington. I'd really have gone, only my sister..." She choked at the remembrance. "You see, the Major and I have been—friends—for many years. He used to be in our home a great deal back in the old days. Afterwards we went away for some years in Europe and lost track of him, but we moved back here a few years ago through the advertisement in the paper of these houses to rent. I really don't know why I'm telling you all this, but perhaps you'll understand that Major Cornwall and I are very—good friends."

"I understand," I told her gently. The glowing embers on the hearth conjured up pictures in my mind of Miss Patience in those years between, exemplifying her name, and yet hugging the dead flowers of romance to her. "You want, I take it, to ask my advice about going to the Major—now."

She looked relieved.

"Yes, Mr Brannington."

"I think, Miss Patience, the Major will quite understand how it is. After all, there is no one has more right than his son and daughter-in-law."

"There's nothing wrong, or against the law in my going, is there?"

I smiled.

"Purely a matter of judgment and an overruling of the doctor's orders, Miss Patience. I'm sure you will see the folly of it."

"Thank you, Mr Brannington. That's just what my sister says, only I wanted some one else's judgment on it. I'm sorry to have troubled you."

As she crossed the courtyard I watched her stop and look up at the lights in Number 7. Then, after a space, she went on to her own apartment at Number 5.

Somehow, when in the morning Emmaline came hurrying in with the news, I was not surprised.

"Mr Brannington, sir! She's gone an' done it!"

"She? Who?"

"Miss Patience, sir. She's up in the Major's place now. W'en Miss Corneroy woke up a while back, she found her sister had put some things in a little bag and gone."

And on investigation, Emmaline's estimate of the case proved correct. The doctor when he came smiled queerly, and made another remark about the women, but this time it was not "God bless 'em."

VIII.

There were times when the thought of Miss Patience's silence during those days aroused within me the bitterness of scorn, and then again I remembered in her favour the timidity of her nature, and the fearfulness with which she worshipped the Major. Perfect love had not then come to cast out fear.

The same day of which I speak—the day on which we learned that Miss Patience Corneroy had tardily assayed the rôle of nurse—the doctor came to my place with Ronald and Letty under his escort.

"Discharged!" laughed the doctor. "Superseded by a higher command."

"You're not afraid to take us in?" Letty smiled up at me. "The doctor has submitted us to all manner of fumigation, and gives us a clean bill."

Later, after the doctor had

gone and Ronald had lost himself anew in his unfinished browsing among my books, I had a chance to speak to Letty alone. She told me, very simply, of the coming of Miss Patience to fill the place that the Major in his ramblings had assigned to her.

"She's such a pathetic little thing, and so anxious to be all that he would expect of her," Letty told me, "and so proud that he wanted *her* to be with him. She did not suggest it in so many words, but when I said Ronald and I would keep out of it, and whispered assurance that if we could help it the Major should never know that she wasn't the first to go to him, she was so breathlessly, wordlessly eager, I nearly cried for joy to see her. Then the doctor came and said he could arrange for us to be properly disinfected, so we could leave, and the Major will be none

the wiser. You must promise me to say nothing, Mr Brannington."

I asked quickly, "But—Ronald?"

She shook her head wistfully.

"It won't make any difference that way," she said; "you see, he came just because I was there. He would not turn a hand for the Major, but tended the other sick man. I've made him promise too—Captain Terry, I mean. He looked so queer when I asked him, but he promised. You will, won't you?"

I gave my word. Later I heard that her conspiracy of silence had been tactfully spread throughout the Court,

always with the simplicity she displayed in asking my support. It did not seem to occur to Letty Cornwall what a splendid thing she was doing.

Later I mentioned it to Ronald, praising his wife's self-abnegation. He turned upon me with that quick little cynical twist about the mouth.

"It suits me," he said briefly; "if the Major had known, it would have put me in a false position with him. We'll neither of us trouble him as soon as we can get clear of this damnable hole. I'm taking her to the Pacific coast, and if he wants our address he can hunt for it. I'm through!"

IX.

The night on which the whole affair saw its conclusion was so like that which had ushered us into our reign of terror that, for many of us, it brought vivid remembrance of the opening circumstances.

Drizzle and fog coming on with the darkness, and through it all the cheery glow of lights in the windows, as though the Court was celebrating the fact that to-morrow no brass-buttoned guard would stop us when we assayed to pass out of the gate. The quarantine, which had been rigorously maintained, even after a considerable period of convalescence, by authorities who were taking no chances, was officially lifted, indeed, at seven o'clock that evening.

At seven also—in Gadwick's apartment, loaned for the occasion—the Major gave his famous dinner—a Major very thin and feeble, but spruce and military in his bearing as ever. All the dwellers of the Court were invited—all, that is, except two. Over in Number 3 lights twinkled long after darkness had signalised the departure of the folk from the other apartment. Ronald and his wife were packing. The invitation had not included them.

In some ways this Letty Cornwall, who could on occasion play the woman so well, was very much of a child. She told me, whimsically, as I left at seven for the Major's—

"Bring me some ice-cream back in your pocket. I wish

I were going." Then she whispered, with a quick glance backward, "Tell them all—good-bye for me, Mr Brannington, won't you? I'm going to miss you all horribly. You see, one gets to know folk so well in a time like this, doesn't one? And—good-bye yourself—and a thousand thanks for all your kindness." I looked my surprise, and she said, "No, you see you needn't bring that ice-cream—I'll be gone."

"In the morning, though," I interposed.

"To-night," she said, a little shakily. "Ronald wants us to slip away without any fuss or farewells. He's up there composing a letter of thanks to you now. You won't tell a soul, will you, until we're gone? Ronald is so strange these days. I don't think hate and love can live very well in the same house, do you?"

I had to go then, but in the grip of her hand I sensed something of the loneliness of a soul in exile.

It spoiled the dinner for me. And yet there were so many interesting things that at times I almost forgot Letty Cornwall and her brave resignation. Now that the shadow was lifted, how quickly the old self came to each one. In the kitchen Emmaline, with

Slim and Marty, dished the dinner, and the maids from those who were fortunate in possessing help of this kind acted as waitresses—quite entering into the spirit of the celebration. Gadwick, the lawyer—immaculate in his evening clothes of a slightly antique cut—gallantly played up to the elder Miss Corneroy's sallies. The rank and file laughed uproariously at nothing in particular. But my attention was for a few. On the Major's right sat the stranger who had caused all the disturbance—a grizzled elderly man who somehow seemed out of place there, as though the seafaring life had put upon him a stamp of rough-and-readiness. I noticed, though, that his table manners were correct, and it flashed across me that the lack of ease was through disuse and not through lack of breeding. He was introduced to us by the Major as "My friend, Captain Terry."

On the Major's left sat Miss Patience—and I thought as I looked upon her that I had never seen such an admixture of glowing happiness and fear. Poor Miss Patience!—the memory of her sitting there scarce daring to drink her cup of bliss comes to rebuke all thought of criticism.

X.

We had barely taken our places at the table when there came an incident that I still recall with zest.

"Confound it," said the Major, "why don't they bring on the oysters?"

One of the "borrowed"

maids approached. She seemed very frightened of the Major. She whispered something to him.

"Fiddlesticks!" snorted the Major. "Tell Emmaline to serve the dinner at once. I can't see her now about any complaints."

The maid went, but Emmaline herself appeared in a trice in the doorway. She had a blue-checked apron still covering her best dress—donned in honour of the party—and her face was beet colour, not altogether due, as it seemed, to her efforts in preparing dinner. She stood just inside the doorway, regarding the company with an air between anger and nervous fear.

"Where," queried the Major icily—"where is dinner? We are twenty minutes late now." The Major was punctilious about time.

Emmaline put hands on hips, and delivered herself of her famous ultimatum.

"There'll be no dinner served h'if I know it," she said, "until Miss Letty comes!" Emmaline always insisted on giving Letty the prefix of maidenhood.

The Major's jaw dropped; his eyeglasses fell from his shapely nose. In those days domestic help was more tractable than now; Emmaline in her defiance was a generation ahead of her time.

"Bless my soul!" said the Major, nonplussed.

"Who," asked Emmaline, taking a step forward—"who 'as been the garden h'angel of this plice since the plague

come, I'd like to know? Who's kep' us all from dyin' of sheer fright?"

Reinforcements appeared suddenly from behind. The doorway framed the Hibernian countenance of Marty, and alongside the morosely-moustached Slim.

"Bless my soul!" cried the Major again. "It's a—a damned revolution, Cap'n!"

"Mutiny!" averred the Captain, scowling ferociously, and trying to prevent the twinkle in his eye from becoming too apparent.

"What's the world coming to?" snapped the Major, voicing an age-long question.

"Rank rebellion!" affirmed the Captain, pulling at a scrubby new growth of beard.

"It's this way, sor," said Marty Connolly, coming forward, and bracing himself for the encounter. "This here dinner business was in cilibration av the—av the——"

"Safe issue out of our troubles," suggested the Captain, staring at the ceiling.

"Right, sor," said Marty gratefully. "An' we were all asked to pitch in an' help on them terms—that it was for all the folk av the Court. Now we find that the little leddy—Mrs Cornwall—is lift out of it, an' she the wan that meant most to us all. So, in she comes or out we go—ivery last man an' woman of us common folk, though it cost all of thim their places."

In the lull of a moment the elder Miss Corneroy's voice was heard clearly.

"Such impudence, Major! Order them away at once, and we all, I am sure, will wait on ourselves. You can deal with these impertinent servants afterwards."

"Indeed, sir," broke in Emmaline, more hotly than ever, but appealing now to the Major, "you can take my word for it she's at the bottom of all the trouble. It's all along of 'er this place is at h'odds and h'ends—Vanity Square I calls it—and it's people like 'er mikes all the trouble in the world, grindin' down folks under their blinkin' 'eels. Marty, 'ere, he's well up in it—he'll tell you."

Gadwick, the lawyer, rose to the occasion.

"Major Cornwall," he said, "this deep political argument may be very interesting, but meanwhile the oysters to which you made succulent reference are still below, and I doubt not the soup and meat are endangered. If a mere guest may be pardoned such a breach, I would like to support this rather — er — remarkable attempt at coercion. Mrs Letty Cornwall has endeared herself to all of us these last days. We ask it as a favour that, if she will consent at this late date to come, she be sent for. It will make our meal complete. With your permission I would nominate Mr Brannington as the delegation most likely to succeed."

The Major sank down in his chair; his face was working strangely. Then he said—

"The terror from which we

have escaped, ladies and gentlemen, may well excuse many things to-night. If you will, Mr Brannington. Maybe"—a suspicion of a smile flickered—"Emmaline will withdraw her battle hosts below, and proceed meanwhile with the serving."

"Thank you, sir," said Emmaline meekly, and withdrew. She seemed glad enough to escape, and her glance of triumph at the elder Miss Corneroy brought a flashing glance before which she almost wilted. The traditions of a lifetime are not easily upset.

"If—that—person comes," said Miss Corneroy decisively, "I shall leave the room."

The Major looked uneasy. I hurried away before any countermanding order might be given.

My task was not an easy one, but some intuition bade me win out at all costs. I think the appeal of the dinner being spoiled for most of us without her appearance did it. She said finally, with one of those rare smiles of hers—

"I've a lot of packing to do, Mr Brannington. But they mustn't know we're leaving. Ronald wants no fuss or farewells. Perhaps you'll—thank them all for me, and say I'll try and drop in for a few minutes—later on."

It was the best I could do, and I let it go at that. The rebellious forces received the news, and were appeased if not reconciled. But the dinner went through its courses, and still she did not come. Miss

Corneroy ate with an air that said she would do her duty by the dinner until her duty to other things demanded action. I have sometimes thought, from the way she kept an eye on the entrance through which Letty must come, that she betrayed an eagerness to humiliate the girl before us all.

After dinner came the Major's toast-list, and that night I saw the Major through new eyes. The memory of all other toasts fades before the one that the Major spoke, with the glass in his hand not quite steady as he uttered the words—

"I want you to rise," he said, "to rise with me, friends, and drink the health and happiness of one who exemplified in her conduct the most sublime courage and womanliness. The one who faces danger bravely because unconscious of fear is scarcely a hero. The one who faces it knowing all the time the deadly grip of fear is the real hero, because the fight then is more against self—the greater enemy. Let me pay personal tribute to one who, through brave fortitude and tender care, has nursed me back to life. She has shown this real courage of which I speak. Though always brought up in a sheltered way, depending upon others almost for her thinking,"—I fancied the Major's lip curled a little, and I dared not glance at Miss Corneroy the elder—"when the need came she answered it without hesitation. I give you," said the Major, coughing a

little, "I give you my future wife—the former sweetheart of childhood days—Miss Patience!"

I fancy that every eye, of those who knew the story, went involuntarily to Miss Patience; I fancy too that surprise in the announcement was swallowed up in a complexity of emotions. The glow that had brought a renewment of youth to Miss Patience faded. She seemed to be waiting dumbly for some of us to set off the mine that would blow her hopes into nothingness. I believe that Miss Patience had been such a dreamer of dreams that, childishly, she had permitted herself to live in this fool's paradise, hoping that it would come out right, not realising just what a sacrifice Letty Cornwall had made.

But no one spoke. We had risen to drink the toast, keeping our pledge to Letty. I saw the man, Captain Terry, glance strangely at Miss Patience. The Major, stopping to enjoy the dramatic triumph of his announcement, was just lifting his glass to his lips when we heard Miss Patience's voice.

"Stop!" she cried. "Don't drink that, please! I can't take what isn't mine!" Her eyes met her sister's; Miss Corneroy seemed to be signalling frantic disapproval. Miss Patience's eyes wavered for a moment only. Then she said, "You've all been very kind to say nothing—like she must have asked you—but you see"—the glance she gave the

Major, standing stiffly erect beside her, was a sweet, tremulous, almost girlish thing—"it wasn't I who responded to your appeal. I was afraid. It was"—her eyes seemed to be caught in her sister's baleful glare again—"it was," she stammered, and choked.

Then all eyes turned suddenly from Miss Patience to a flushed little figure in the doorway. Letty had arrived at last.

I have always admired the Major more since that moment. The shock of Miss Patience's confession left him whiter than ever for a moment, but a guest, invited by him, was in the doorway, and gentility triumphed. He excused himself to Miss Patience, and went forward, bowing with courtly grace.

"It was good of you to come at all," I heard him say. What reply she made was lost in a murmur of whispering about the table, but Letty favoured the Major with a smile that could scarcely have left so gallant a gentleman unmoved. Often since have I speculated when it was that the light of day broke in upon him, and the identity of the real respondent to his need was flashed to his mind. I still cling to the belief that his innate gentility was the thing that first moved him to welcome her.

"We must find you," said the Major, glancing around and evidently perturbed at this lack of foresight—"we must find you a place."

Then it was that the elder Miss Corneroy rose stiffly.

"Mrs Cornwall may have my place."

There are silences that can be *felt*. The hush that came at this obvious and deliberate insult was of that kind. I heard Miss Patience, who had sunk back lifelessly into her place, give a little cry—but apart from that, and the ticking of the clock through the few seconds that the hush lasted, there was a deadly quiet. Over by the doorway the Major had ranged alongside the girl, Letty; had offered her, indeed, his arm, as though in deliberate alliance. Facing him from across the table was Miss Corneroy, white with the pallor of hatred. Their eyes seemed to hold each other with an unbreakable spell. Neither seemed able to move.

Miss Corneroy it was who broke the hypnotic period.

"There is no reason, Major Cornwall," she said, "why we should prolong this farce. Perhaps in fairness to myself I may be permitted to explain a position that may seem to call for the censure of these—friends. The impression seems to be that I refuse to sit in the room with Mrs Cornwall because of her—ah—lack of social standing—because she was a—a shop-girl. That is hardly the reason. It is perhaps best for all concerned that the thing should be put straight now—otherwise rumour will whisper many things that are not true. The Corneroy's have no reason to love the name of Cornwall. Over a

third of a century ago"—let me pause in my tale to express admiration for this woman who despised her sex's squeamishness in the matter of age—the Cornerroys and Cornwalls were partners in a great financial enterprise. The enterprise failed with a crash, carrying down many to ruin and disgrace. Defalcations were charged, and a Cornerroy was made a scapegoat. He went to jail, with only one of the Cornwall family protesting his innocence. That one was Major Cornwall. He was only a young man at the time, but he would have shared the penalty had that been possible. To the condemned man he swore a debt of gratitude that some day he hoped to pay, and swore, too, hatred against the other Cornwalls, who had fled to England. I was only a little girl then, and my sister a baby in arms, but I can remember it all so vividly. We were taken away to be adopted by an aunt, and I can recall when leaving the house, some children watching us go to the carriage, and one nudging another to say, 'Her father's a thief—they've put him in jail.' Something came into my heart that day that the years could not remove. The one ray of light has been the loyalty of Major Cornwall.

My father could not live down the disgrace—though innocent, he disappeared, and we have not heard of him since. Mrs Cornwall may be ignorant and innocent of all this, but no Cornerroy will sit at the table with a Cornwall from across the water. Come, Patience. You will excuse us, Major, but since you have chosen to ally yourself——" She stopped. Looking at her face I thought of Ronald and his hatred, and thought what a complexity of hatred this old-time feud had brought through all the years, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Miss Cornerroy had spoken with admirable dignity and precision, but repression failed her now. She bit her lip, and almost groped her way from the table, and so towards the door. And then we saw Miss Patience grow red and white, and glance at the Major, meeting his eye. But she too rose, and started for the door. The Major, stiff as a ramrod, and with Letty's arm still in his, stood aside to let them pass.

Into our quiet, broken only by the quick breathings of an excited gathering, came the sound of a rumbling bass voice.

"Miss Cornerroy. Miss Patience—please. You must not leave this room."

XI.

Captain Terry was standing at his place. His voice held a mixture of fire and some alien

emotion. It was so commanding, so startling, that Miss Patience stopped dead still, and

even Miss Corneroy faltered and paused.

"In fairness to—everybody—please wait." It was half command, half request.

Miss Corneroy found voice. "Who—what right have you to interfere?"

"The right," said Captain Terry calmly, "of the man who was guilty of the defalcation!"

"You?" I saw Miss Corneroy sway a little—her reserve seemed badly shaken. "Who," she asked again, "who are you?"

"The man," said Captain Terry quietly, "who paid the penalty, and later fled from the disgrace."

The Major's voice thundered out—

"Captain Terry, I want you to tell no lies for me!"

"It's God's truth, Major. I was guilty. The proofs of innocence I gave you were spurious; afterwards I could never bear to undeceive you. Your loyalty to me—to us all—was something I could not bear to lose. These last days have changed us all. We've all been facing something. That's why we're talking so frankly, I think. And our friend Letty Cornwall has shown me at least the way of selflessness. The Cornwalls have played their part—you, old man, have cancelled that imaginary debt by taking me in at risk of your life; Miss Letty has shown, Major, as you may have guessed by now, a spirit of forgiveness and love

towards yourself and Miss Patience that has made some of the rest of us sit up and think. Perhaps, Major, you'll even find it in your heart to forgive—me."

But before the Major could make a move, Miss Patience had run forward.

"Then you are——?" she began tremulously.

"I am—your father, child."

And indeed it seemed in that moment that Miss Patience's starved childhood came to reassert itself after over thirty fatherless years. Perhaps some intuition made her certain of his identity when Miss Corneroy herself, through shaken pride, refused to credit it.

"It is Bartholomew Corneroy—your father," the Major said gravely. "As Captain Terry he has lived a life of exile from his kind. If he has wronged any he has suffered for it. I thank God that, stranded here in his sickness, he sent for me." Still holding Letty's arm, he faced Miss Corneroy—meeting the thing in her eye squarely, and recognising it. He said, still more gravely, "This is no time for false pride. Pride has done enough mischief for us all now. God knows I speak it from my heart." I fancied that his hold of Letty Cornwall's arm tightened for a moment, and I sensed the loneliness that sent his thoughts to Ronald; but he recovered bravely, smiling a little, to say, "Emma-line's 'Vanity Square' is re-

deeming itself to-night. I shall really have to subscribe to Emmaline's statements, my dear, if you——" He paused. No one, I am convinced, but the Major could have done it. Before that humorous but meaningful glance from his eyes the impossible happened—Miss Corneroy's lids wavered, her glance fell. Very precisely she turned and went to the Cap-

tain. Her first words were characteristic.

"Don't keep the man standing up like that, Patience! Haven't you sense enough to remember he's been sick?"

So was the Captain welcomed by his family after many years. But I saw the Major turn away as though he chose not to look upon the reunion.

XII.

It was surely not surprising that none of us thought of the passing of time, much less Letty Cornwall, who was ushered so suddenly into the strange scenes of this hour.

Emmaline appeared suddenly with the message, "Please, Major, but Miss Letty's wanted downstairs at once. Mr Ronald's askin' for her, sir, and he seems rare put out." Evidently Ronald had impressed her with the need of haste, for Emmaline's jaws were still struggling with a mouthful from that feast at which the lesser folk made merry.

Letty went white, and turned to go. I sensed the feeling that must have come to her in that moment: to go, without even a farewell upon her lips, away from the strange sweet fellowship of this hour—a fellowship that must have answered the great yearning of her companionable little self—away out into the unknown, with hate to dull the edge of the love for which she was

leaving, and which alone must sustain her. I caught her quick backward glance, and the brave smile and nod she gave me I shall always cherish. Far more than any words, these little things are the index of character.

Major Cornwall seemed inclined to follow—to reach out after her—almost as though he knew she was going from him for ever,—this little girl in whom, tardily, he had found the thing that appealed to his own brave nature.

At last he shrugged his shoulders and came back into the room, with the struggle barely gone from his face. He had taken but three paces when I saw some decision shape itself, and with an abrupt excuse he left us.

Three minutes later Emmaline's rotund form appeared again, more breathless than ever, with tragedy writ large upon her perspiring face. She appealed to me directly, perhaps because of those

many evenings spent at Number 12A.

"Mr Brannington, sir. The Mijor and Mr Ronald, sir!"

"Yes?" I encouraged. She had stopped, breathing heavily.

"The Mijor and Mr Ronald are quarrelling somethink fierce, sir. I'm fair terrified, sir. Perhaps you'd come."

I rose with an exclamation on my lips. A quick sense of impending tragedy came to me, rooted not in any alarm of the woman's, but in the memory of the thing I had seen in Ronald's eyes. I hurried down.

The Major was standing on the doorstep — alone — looking across the little court to the lights in Number 3.

"Major." I put my hand on his shoulder.

He said heavily, "I've done it now, Brannington! I came in a spirit of forgiveness, and he rebuffed me. I offered to fight him, sir, my tem-

per bringing forgetfulness again!"

"To fight him, Major?"

"To fight him, sir. He was upbraiding the little girl for coming to us to-night. I told him off, sir. The young black-guard! He would not fight. He just laughed at me, and I, by gad, sir, I struck him across the face! He followed her into the house. She fled when we began to quarrel. I have lost them both now!"

I tried to express something of the thing that rose up in me just then. The Major seemed suddenly to have aged terribly. He shook his head decisively.

"Dammit, sir," he cried, "don't stand here yawping out sentimental folly! Go on over and see that the little girl gets a square deal!"

I loved the Major all the more when I went to do his bidding.

XIII.

The house was very quiet when I entered. And then I thought I caught the sound of a woman's suppressed sobbing. Something of the Major's anger came to me. I wanted just then to meet Ronald.

I found him upstairs in his own room, busy over a port-manteau. He did not favour me with a look when I entered. I just stood and stared. From out the neatly-packed port-manteau he was pulling collars and ties and what not, and

flinging them into a supreme disorder on the bed.

"Ronald, man!" The question would not be denied. "What in the name of all that's good . . . what's the idea?" I waved a hand helplessly at the bed.

He turned to me a face that was almost sheepish. Then he straightened up, coloured, and met my eye squarely.

"Dash it all, Brannington," he said, "I was going to quit to-night, but I think I'll stick

around and let the Major introduce me to my own wife. I thought I knew what a fine little kid she is—but say, you ought to have heard the Major! Called me everything under the sun, Brannington. Not fit to blacken her last year's shoes, he said. Wanted to fight me—honest, he did!" Ronald forgot all embarrassment in a quick rush of boyish enthusiasm. "Say, the old boy's the real stuff after all, isn't he? Do you know, Brannington, I'll bet he'd have given me a great battle at that, if he is just up out of bed. It's the spirit that counts—and if anybody lacks spirit it isn't dad!"

Somewhere in the back of my mind was a remembrance of an unmanageable horse that could be broken into harness only by drastic action. But I hastened to say—

"How about Letty? Have you told her? She's feeling pretty cut up over leaving, I think."

"Was—not is." We started at the voice behind us. A slightly tear-stained but quite radiant Letty stood there. "I couldn't help overhearing," she apologised. "Oh, Ronald!"

Even a confirmed bachelor has his moments of insight and good sense. I beat a hasty retreat downstairs, and out into the cold clear autumn night, for the drizzle of rain had ceased. For a moment I stopped to give place for thanksgiving, and looking up at the lights in Number 3 saw a scene

silhouetted that indiscreetly mocked my bachelorhood. Then I went on to Gadwick's once again—to the famous dinner-party and—the Major.

How many years ago? you ask. Ah, better find the elder Miss Corneroy, who has so supreme a disregard for the yearly records of Father Time. You will find her wherever Captain Bartholomew Corneroy spends his roving existence, caring for him with a rule of iron that seems to suit him, for he retains the perennial bloom and spirit of youth that stood him well through all his troubles.

The other day I met a man, ruddy, inclined to corpulence, dressed in the habiliments of those whom the world treats generously. He nearly wrung my hand off.

"You don't remember me, sir? I'm Marty—Marty Connolly. What's that? Mr and Mrs Foddleton of Vanity Square? Bless you, sir, they live down in my ward. If you've nothing on this evening, perhaps——?"

I went.

Emmaline nearly wept over me. The years had dealt with her in a kindly way. Slim had scarcely altered, though he seemed taller and thinner than ever, and his morosely drooping moustache was streaked plentifully with grey.

We sat long that night, talking, as human beings always will while time lasts, of the "good old days"; of the

lawyer Gadwick, since gone through those portals where his legal mind will stand him less in stead than the kindly heart we had come to know and love; of the Corneroys and the Cornwalls—Ronald and “Miss Letty” and the Major.

“Stringe, isn’t it, sir,” said Emmaline. “I always think of it still as ‘Vanity Square,’ and yet I think maybe I spoke ‘asty about it that w’y.”

“That was a great speech you made, Emmaline,” I laughed.

“She mighta lost us h’all our jobs,” said Slim, shaking his head gravely. “She’s an orful woman that w’y with her tongue. Now you tike me, I’m tactful. Like the time I said to that perisher, Lord Lumley, ‘Kind ‘earts,’ I says.”

“Stow your kind ‘earts, Slim!” advised Marty. “The thing I want to know”—he winked at me—“is how much the Cap’n gave you, Emmaline, to spring that stuff.”

“Get aw’y with you, Mart Connolly,” said Emmaline indignantly. “The Cap’n he comes to me and puts me h’up to it. ‘Nothin’ but a bloomin’ h’earthquake will shake us all straight,’ he says, and wants to p’y me to speak up. ‘Get out,’ I told ‘im, ‘I’m fighting mad about it now, and if you say it’s right

for me to up an’ speak, speak I will.’”

“Some one,” put in Slim, “some one ought to write this perishin’ story. I’ve seen worse in the magazines.”

“Good stuff!” acclaimed Marty. “It’s up to you, Mr Brannington.”

“Yes,” said Emmaline, with a new softness in her faded eyes, “an’ don’t forget, sir, ‘ow I went h’out into the Court the very next night and found them there in the moonlight.”

“Ronald and his wife?” I asked.

“I almost fell h’over them,” said Emmaline. “Least I thought it was them. They jumped up from the shady side of the fountain-place, sir, an’ I says, jokin’ like, ‘Excuse me, Mr Ronald, but you needn’t mind me seein’. A man may kiss ‘is wife when he likes, I s’y.’ And who was it but the Mijor hisself, and Miss Patience who give a little shriek, and they walked aw’y out the gate very dignified, and quite far h’apart as it were, sir; but I follered ‘em a bit, and you mind where the trees is heavy up the street even after the leaves is almost gone? Well, ‘e took ‘er arm again there, sir. I sawr ‘im, I did. Just think, sir—the Mijor! You’ll put that in, sir?”

“I will, Emmaline,” I promised.

THE IVORY BUDDHA.

BY J. O. P. BLAND.

SOONER or later, to every man, there comes a time when his day-dreams turn more readily to the past than to the future, when the latest map upon the wall calls up remembrances of things past rather than new visions of long trails and quests that are never done. Sooner or later Odysseus wearies of the wine-dark sea and finds increasing comfort in the thought of his own hearthstone, where the song of the sirens, mingling with the soothing murmur of Penelope's distaff, shall come but as the memory of some distant music, bitter-sweet. Grudgingly or gracefully, the *wanderlust*, like love and the fine frenzy of the poet's soul, yields to the insidious hand of Time. Here and there some superman, like Goethe or Tolstoy, or Pliny the Elder, may succeed in preserving something of the divine fire unquenched by years, pursuing the spirit of Romance with stout heart in spite of rheumatic joints; but the general run of mankind, having weathered the roaring 'forties and the fattening 'fifties, are content to drift gently into leisurely fireside habits and to confine their wanderings to well-beaten tracks, wherein creature comforts may be found. True it is, that they keep their youth the longest and savour best the wine of

life, in whom the *wanderlust* persists in spite of years; and their treasure-house of memories is the richer for every added year of traffics and discoveries. But to all, sooner or later, comes a day when the spirit no longer moves one to revisit the glimpses of adventurous moons, when, as the rain drives in fierce gusts against the curtained pane, we snuggle down into our easiest arm-chair and thank Heaven that to-night we go not down to the sea in ships. And fortunate he who, when that day comes, has gathered from his wanderings, to brighten the horizon of that easy-chair, some salvage and flotsam of memorable times and tides—pictures or bric-a-brac, what you will, the strange gods of the heathen or the skins of beasts—things that shall recall to mind the touch of kindly vanished hands, the sights and sounds of old familiar haunts.

I am one of those fortunate ones, *moi qui vous parle*, for from my easy-chair, when in lazy mood or weary of the chimney-pots and back gardens of Kensington, my meditative eye can wander gratefully around and about a little walled world, wherein pictures and curios and books summon spirits at my bidding from all the Seven Seas, and conjure visions of the fading years. Narrow enough, in terms of

space, this horizon of shelves and walls, yet, with the help of memory's magic carpet, a great gateway that discovers all the whole wide world, and "charmed magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas." A tale of many wanderings and sojournings in distant lands is told on these four walls, but its dominant and ever-recurring note is that of Far Cathay. It begins in the 'eighties, with "Chinese Gordon's" large red visiting-card, bearing its laconic superscription of introduction to the favourable notice of the great Li Hung-chang—a scrap of paper (which was never presented, for reasons that have nothing to do with this story) which helped to beguile me straightway from Trinity, Dublin, to the Customs students' quarters in the old Kou-Lan *hutung* at Peking. Then comes the miscellaneous jetsam of thirteen years in the service of His Majesty Kuang Hsü, years of travail (which the locusts have eaten), spent between Hankow, Canton, and Peking, with occasional furloughs in Korea and Japan; several mementoes of the lotus-eating days, before Russia came down through Manchuria with her grey-clad legions and railways, when the East still slumbered and the Old Buddha from the Dragon Throne gave peace in her time. Later on there are milestones of Shanghai days, when we saw the dogs of war were let loose, first by the Boxers, and then in the struggle which ended with the

Rising Sun flying once more at Port Arthur and the Russians driven back to Harbin. Sketches by Willard Straight and M'Cormick recall the nipping eager air of Manchuria and the long Siberian trail. Also there are pictures of houseboats and up-river scenes and tree-girt temples nestling in the hills, very grateful to the retrospective eye; and good honest Chinese faces, that bring to mind, with the fragrance of the gardens of one's youth, all the simple kindness and dog-like fidelity of their race. Every curio, every picture, has its story, from the *mille-fleurs* jar (an excellent imitation) presented to me with much ceremony by an astute Minister of State, to the Ming scroll of the Four Wise Elders, given me by old Sung, the curio dealer of the Soochow *hutung*, to commemorate his emergence, safe and sound, from the terrors of Towns's opium cure, taken at my urgent advice. And then, most precious of all, because of its emanations of perfect serenity, is the Ivory Buddha on his dais of lacquer and gold, as ineffably unconscious of the fretful penalties of material existence here in London as he was in the little shrine of the Po Yün Kuan, where for three hundred years and more incense and the prayers of the faithful were offered up before him.

It is over a quarter of a century since he left that little shrine to become an honoured member of my household, but age cannot wither nor custom

stale the august restfulness, the mysterious time-defying charm, which the art of a great craftsman has wrought into the features of the ivory god. The first time that I saw him, his face reminded me of two others—La Gioconda and the Sphinx—which, because they both express (while seeming to have solved for themselves) the riddle of existence, appeal eternally and universally to the hearts of men. But the virtue which radiates from the mystic serenity of Amida in *partibus* exceeds that of either Monna Lisa or the Dreamer in the desert, even as Karma is greater than life itself.

"Perfectly extinct upon his throne," as the Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law hath it, the Ivory Buddha contemplates me from his place of honour by my hearthstone with an air of gentle and benevolent detachment, carrying my mind back to those Buddha-fields of Northern China where long ago I gleaned something of the teachings of the Selfless One, something of the eternal mystery of the Circle of Illusion and the shoreless seas of Birth and Death. As I gaze at him, softly glistening in the fire-light, memories of those days come crowding; golden days, when every excursion into the unknown world of the wise old East was a glorious adventure, where Romance lay ever in waiting at the next bend of the road, and mystery lurked behind every grey wall. Once again, like wine in the blood,

comes the thrill that one knew at first discovering the charm of existence in China's ancient capital, that subtle charm which still lingers, like that of melodies unheard, with a magic all its own. Once again I hear the choir invisible of Peking's pigeons whirling, with music in their wings, and can feel the tingling glory of an autumn morning, as in the days when I used to ride out through the Hsi Pien Men with O'Hara, to our summer quarters and stables in a temple hard by the race-course.

Amidst the sunlit memories of those days, when first I made acquaintance with the Ivory Buddha, and resolved, if it were possible, to become his owner (or rather, I should say, his host), two faces stand out clearly—old Chang, the genial Abbot of the Po Yün Kuan, and Torginsky, the soft-footed silent Russian with the face of a holy apostle and the mind of a Metternich, commonly known to us, his colleagues of the Customs Inspectorate, as the "Living Buddha."

Old Chang I had known, in a casual way, for some years before that summer when O'Hara and I got into the way of dropping in on him for a cup of tea and a chat on our way to the race-course. A sociable old fellow he was, full of wise saws and old wives' tales, and a good Buddhist as Chinese priests go, well learned in the sacred books, and devout in the performance of his duties; but, like many of his brethren of the contemplative creed, a hard-

ened opium-smoker. It was this weakness, combined with the dwindling revenues of the temple, which occasionally compelled him to raise the wind by selling unconsidered trifles of ecclesiastical property—old scrolls and Buddhas, and vestments of soft-tinted brocade. He had even sold the *cloisonné* candlesticks from the altar to an American globe-trotter, and replaced them by cheap Soochow brasses. I myself had bought from him an eight-armed Kuanyin of sandalwood and a couple of those somewhat gruesome bloodshot sacrificial bowls, which are made from the crania of priests, decapitated *in articulo mortis*. But despite many tactful overtures on my part, he had steadily refused to part with the Ivory Buddha; it was, he said, a precious thing, inscribed on the official list of the Temple's treasures since the days of Chien Lung, the work of the same famous artist who had carved the great standing Buddha of the Huang Kung. He used to keep it carefully wrapped up in a bit of old yellow silk, under lock and key, in the big chest which stood by the stove-bed in his inner chamber, and only brought it out on solemn occasions to stand in its appointed place beside the central incense-burner. Thus he avoided temptation for himself, and for the Blessed One the increasing risks of abduction by the hand of the ungodly.

But Torginsky, of course, knew more about the Ivory

Buddha and all the other treasures of the shrine (including old Chang's tin of Patna) than the Abbot himself. A mysterious fellow, Torginsky, even in those early days; a strange mixture, typically Russian, of the ascetic and the voluptuary; a dreamer and a schemer, a Don Quixote and a semi-political *savant*. All Oriental languages seemed to come to him as a matter of inherited instinct, and his spiritual home was obviously among Asiatics rather than with Europeans. Indeed, he moved in the cosmopolitan world of Peking's diplomatic society and amidst the dry formalities of official routine like some distinguished and affable, but undeniably bored, stranger at a bourgeois entertainment. Only occasionally he joined, so to speak, in our procession and became accidentally human; notably so when, under the influence of what Shaw calls the "life force," he would forsake his usual haunts and hobbies among the natives and throw himself, with exaggerated and romantic devotion, at the feet of some fair lady who had taken his erratic and fastidious fancy. But even in these moments of expansion, or when briefly beguiled by convivial occasions and heart-warming wine, there was always about him an elusive and exotic quality, an aloofness, which precluded any approach to intimacy even by those who knew him best. *Per contra*, his Chinese name was a house-

hold word with every tea-house gossip, every camel-driver, and every beggar in Peking. Even to-day (as I had occasion recently to learn), in the curioshops of the Liu Li-chang and in the slumbrous courtyards of the temples in and about Peking, the older generation still speaks of "Tao Laoyeh" with the respect which Orientals always pay to the inscrutable. Indeed, after his characteristically mysterious disappearance into the Mongolian wilds, somewhat later than the time of which I write, he became almost a legendary figure in the little Chinese world which lives around and upon the foreign Legations at Peking, a figure which gradually took on a reputation for superhuman wisdom and mystic virtues. There were, of course, very real qualities, generally unsuspected by most of us, to account for the deep mark which he undoubtedly made upon the native mind; also, there were ambitions and definitely-formed purposes behind that Don Quixote expression, that gift of timely silence, and possibly beneath certain of his somewhat peculiar habits, such as that of dispensing copper-cash largesse from a bag carried by a native servant to the crowd of beggars and loafers that always followed him on his walks abroad. If Japan had not been successful in driving Russia from Manchuria, if Mouravieff's dream had been fulfilled, as it was meant to be, by the plots and plans of Alexieff,

Pavlow, Wogack, and the rest, Mongolia would assuredly have become a very bright gem in the Tsar's Oriental diadem; and Torginsky would have made an ideal semi-Oriental satrap for a viceregal court at Urga. But that, as Kipling says, is another story.

I have said that Torginsky knew all about our friend the Abbot and the dwindling treasures of the Po Yün Kuan. If old Chang had ever suspected the extent and depth of that knowledge—well, the Ivory Buddha would probably never have come my way. It would either have remained to gladden the eyes of the faithful, or it would have been added to Torginsky's unique collection of Buddhistic antiquities, and thus eventually have passed into the hands of the Moscow magnate to whom, with a *beau geste* of indifference, Torginsky sold the lot as a souvenir of the said magnate's first journey by the Trans-Siberian line. But old Chang only knew the silent, courteous Russian as a foreigner curiously well versed in Buddhist lore, and one whose visits were welcomed with respect by every temple dignitary in the north, from the Huang Kung to the Eastern Tombs. Had he not been received in audience by the Dalai Lama himself, and was he not known to be in frequent communication with the Living Buddha of Ulias-sutai? The guardians of the small suburban shrines treated him accordingly with remark-

able deference, and the prices at which he could acquire relics and temple gear were ridiculously low.

It was the dusk of a sultry evening in July, when O'Hara and I were chatting over our coffee and cigars among the oleanders and pomegranates of our Temple courtyard, that old Chang put in a sheepish appearance, walking delicately, and bearing a message which, he said, he must deliver to me in private. This message, which he took furtively from his sleeve, turned out to be the Ivory Buddha. He had made up his mind, it appeared, to accept my last offer—sixty dollars—for the reason that "the shrine was void, the altar bare," and he had not money even to buy joss-sticks. He only stipulated that my purchase must be kept secret, for a while at least, lest a bird of the air carry the matter to the seats of the mighty. So the impious deal was concluded, and old Chang shuffled off into the darkness with his sixty dollars. And next morning Amida looked out upon a world of which he had never dreamed beneath his banyan-tree—a world in which the most conspicuous objects on the painted veil were the latest efforts of Jan van Beers, a banjo and a terrier pup.

Remembering my promise to old Chang, I was just taking the ivory image from my desk and preparing to put it away in a despatch-box, when Torginsky put his head in at the door, unannounced, and his

body followed it. He was in a particularly human and genial mood that morning, having fallen desperately in love, ten days before, with the latest Marchesa of the Italian Legation, one of whose dainty gloves he was carrying about with him all day long, as Galahad might have carried the Holy Grail. He had looked in, he said, to suggest a stroll on the wall before going to the office, desiring, no doubt, to tell me all about the unrivalled charms of the lady. Then his wandering eye fell upon the Buddha. In his absent-minded way he sauntered across to my desk, without saying a word, and taking it up, carried it to the window and examined it closely.

"So," he said, "you have bought the little *foyek* of the Po Yün Kuan? Old Chang must have been unusually hard up. What did you give for it?"

I told him the price, and asked, for the old priest's sake, that he should say nothing of the matter. Still examining the Buddha, with long-fingered hands which seemed to caress it, he agreed. Then, taking a penknife from his pocket, "You know," he said, "that these old temple pieces used often to contain jewels, wrapped up in little prayers painted on yellow silk. Nowadays the stones are generally missing. Shall we see if there are any in this *foyek*?" Without awaiting my reply, he prized open a little square door, so microscopically cut and fitted into

the veined back of the Buddha that I might never have detected it. From the tiny receptacle within he took two little scraps of mouldy orange-coloured silk, all covered with the characters for "Ah-mi-to-foh." Of jewels there was no sign. "It is always best to examine them at once," said the Russian. And with this I put away the ivory god, he took up his lady's glove, and we went for our walk on the wall.

A week later, at the lunch hour, when, as usual, the curio-dealers and silk-hawkers were spreading out their wares on the verandah of the Hsin Yüan mess, there came a knock at my door. Having no mind to buy, I shouted "*Pu yao*"; but the knock persisted, and was followed by the entrance of a small and frightened youth, in whom I recognised old Chang's acolyte and general factotum at the Po Yün Kuan. Stealthily closing the door behind him, he came towards me, and producing from his sleeve a dirty rag, took from it sixty dollars, which he placed upon my desk. "There is your money," he said. "The old *hoshang* could not come himself, but he bade me say that there is trouble about this business, and he begs that you will give him back the Ivory Buddha."

Now this was unusual, for in China a bargain is a bargain, even with priests. But if old Chang were telling the truth, far be it from me to get him into trouble; at the

same time, I had no desire to part with the latest and best of my lares. All attempts to get further explanations from the lad were in vain; he merely begged the more urgently for the return of the Buddha, and when I finally refused, burst into loud lamentations. It was only on my promising to ride out and see the priest that same evening that he consented to depart.

I found old Chang in a doggedly obstinate mood. He kept on repeating that he must have been mad to think of selling a treasure of the temple so well known to the authorities, his superiors; that I ought not to have let him do it; and that if I insisted on keeping the Buddha, he would be forced to say that it had been stolen. Even so, he must lose much face. Did I want to compel him to swallow opium? If I would only give him back the ivory god, I might have anything else I liked in the shrine for a song. I knew that there was more in this than met the eye. "My friend," I said, "keep calm. That which is sold, is sold. If you really want the Buddha back, you must tell me all the truth. What has happened? After all, the temple has lost *foyehs* before now without your losing much face."

At this the old fellow proceeded to discharge his wrath-matter. Why had I not kept the matter secret, as agreed? Why, above all, had I shown the Ivory Buddha to Torginsky, a man with a devilish gift of

divination? It then transpired that the very day after I had unintentionally violated the pact of secrecy, Torginsky had dropped in, quite casually, at the Po Yün Kuan and asked the Abbot, over the tea-cups, to let him examine one of the temple's old black-letter *sutras*. Then, complimenting the priest on being the trusted guardian of such treasures, he had asked to see the Ivory Buddha. "What could I say?" muttered the Abbot. "In my haste I told the first lie that came into my head. I said that thieves had broken into my inner room and had stolen the ivory image and other things. And I begged him to keep the matter secret, so that the thieves might not be frightened into leaving the city, and the stolen goods might thus perhaps be recovered in days to come."

"A good lie wasted," I replied. "I am sorry that Tao *laoyeh* saw the Buddha in my room. It was an accident, for he entered unbidden. Yet even now I cannot understand how it will save your face, old friend, if I restore the Buddha? He must know that I bought it from you."

"Even so, for when I spoke of thieves he smiled a frozen smile, and said that he knew the man to whom they had sold their plunder. 'Twas because of this knowledge that he had come to me. He even knew that the Buddha had been sold for sixty dollars, and he offered to lend me this sum

to buy it back. He said he was sure that the man who had bought it, a friend of his and a just man, would never think of keeping stolen goods!"

At this point I began to feel somewhat lost in the mazes of Oriental diplomacy, and to wonder what Torginsky's little game might be; for, in spite of his mysterious ways and poses, he was always a good sportsman and not the sort to queer another's pitch. It certainly looked as if he wanted me to restore Amida to the shrine, but for the life of me I could not see why. It was certainly not on account of any religious or sentimental scruples.

"Lao *hoshang*," I said, "this is all very interesting, but there must be more to tell. Why should Tao *laoyeh* be so anxious about your selling your treasures when he himself has collected a roomful from every shrine between Peking and Urga?"

"Listen, then," replied the old man, "and I will tell you. That Russian, as I have said, has a devil's gift of divination. He told me that I must buy back the Buddha, because it is recorded in the archives of the temple, of which he seems to know as much as I do, that each of the little prayer-rolls inside it contains a sapphire worth several times sixty dollars. So, you see, it is necessary that you should give me back the Buddha, in order that I may save my face."

"I begin to understand," said I. "Nevertheless, there

can be no face-saving in this way, my friend, for the reason that, just as Tao *laoyeh* knew that the Buddha had not been stolen, so also he knows that there were no jewels inside it when it came into my hands. He opened it in my presence, and I saw with my own eyes that it was empty. What purpose, therefore, will be served by my doing as you suggest? Think again."

The Abbot sat silent for a while, furiously thinking. Twice he lit his pipe and poured himself a fresh cup of tea. Finally he sighed, as one who has done with a hard problem. "This Russian," he said, "is a strange man, and his words are as iron covered with soft silk; nevertheless, he understands *taoli* and can talk reason. If now I tell him the whole truth, no doubt the matter can be arranged between us. Why should he wish to make trouble for me?"

Old Chang was right. The matter was settled in due course, and so discreetly that neither the priest nor Torginsky ever favoured me with details of the pact. All I know is, that no more attempts were made to persuade me to part with the Ivory Buddha, and that shortly afterwards a certain very beautiful Marchesa aroused the envy, hatred, and malice of all her gentle sisters in Legation circles by appearing at a five o'clock with her dainty waist encircled by a belt of kingfishers' feathers and gold filigree, fashioned in the

form of a snake; and the eyes of that glittering reptile were a pair of sapphires.

To-day, among the faithful remnant of worshippers at the Po Yün Kuan, there are still some who remember old Chang, the kindly, easy-going old Abbot with the weakness for opium, and how the worthy man was robbed of the famous Ivory Buddha and other precious treasures of the shrine. I know that this is so, for the story was told me quite recently, as to a stranger from afar, by the aged watchman who now opens the gate of the Temple to visitors. He spoke very earnestly about the alarming increase of evil-doers in recent years, a phenomenon which he attributed to the passing of the Dragon Throne; but he believes in the ultimate triumph of the *Yang* over the *Yin*, of light over darkness, and had no doubt that, just as the Emperor would some day recover the Great Inheritance, so the Ivory Buddha would be miraculously restored to its ancient place. It may be so.

For the present, however, the Buddha dwells serenely on the heights of Campden Hill, and on his lips I can discern the same elusive shadow of a smile as that which flitted in the dim religious light of the altar at the Po Yün Kuan—the gentle smile of the Compassionate One, born of the knowledge that Time and Space, and all the fitful fever of men's lives, are but as tiny ripples on the infinite Ocean of Illusion.

ULSTER IN 1922.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'TALES OF THE R.I.C.'

I. SOME PROBLEMS.

AT the beginning of 1922 the Northern Government were faced with some pretty stiff problems—problems which in the piping times of peace would be hard enough to solve, but which in the midst of civil war appeared at times impossible of solution.

But before the Northern Government could tackle any problem, they had first of all to get going—to create a civil service, police force, law-courts, and all the intricate machinery of a modern Government.

Not a very difficult task if they had been let alone, or received the protection from the Imperial Government to which they were entitled by the Act of 1920.

From the very start the South, seeing the rich taxes of the North slipping from their grasp, laid themselves out to make it impossible for the Northern Government to govern.

Also the Imperial Government were set on forcing Ulster in under the South in order (as they fondly imagined) to complete the success of Lloyd George's super-settlement of the Irish Question.

Add the apparent complete indifference of the English people to what happened to

any one or anything in Ireland, and you have the appalling task which faced the Northern Government.

The hostility of Sinn Fein was, of course, inevitable, and the hostility of Lloyd George to be expected; but the indifference of the English people was a bitter blow to the Ulster Loyalists.

The first problem to be tackled was the Sinn Fein conspiracy to make government in the North impossible: and it was obvious from the beginning that if the Sinn Fein conspiracy could not be met and eventually broken, the Northern Government could never make any headway.

Sinn Fein, probably with the aid and advice of the Russian Bolsheviks, has invented a new method or weapon of warfare—to conquer a country by making it impossible for the Government of that country to function by means of an organised system of outrages,—ambushes of the Government forces, murder of police, soldiers, and Government officials, sabotage, and arson. And all carried out ruthlessly and without any regard for life or property.

This campaign is carried out by men who pose as unoffend-

ing civilians one moment, and the next become "soldiers" of the I.R.A. to carry out some outrage; and when the evil deed is done they at once revert to their original rôle.

In most countries such a campaign would be countered by public opinion, which would give the necessary information to the Government forces to enable them to lay the conspirators by the heels.

But Sinn Fein was prepared for this eventuality, and met it by organising such a terrorism of the general public as has seldom, if ever, been seen. Any man or woman who gave information to the Government was condemned to death by a "court-martial," and duly "executed"—in plain English, murdered.

They were clever enough to realise that the finest police force in the world is powerless unless it has the support and confidence of the general public.

But, in the same way as every new invention of warfare (gas, submarines, aerial bombing, &c.), no matter how terrible, can be met and countered by the brain of man, so can this method of destroying the Government of a country invented by Sinn Fein or Bolshevik, or both combined, be met and overcome by determined men.

The Northern Government had seen the Imperial Government fail to meet and defeat this Sinn Fein method of warfare; and they had the advantage of being able to profit by

the Imperial Government's numerous mistakes.

If the Northern Government had only had to deal with Ulster Sinn Feiners, the task might not have been so difficult; but they had to deal with hordes of imported gunmen from the South as well.

No Government forces can deal with an underground rebellion successfully, no matter how much information the general public may give them, without a well-organised and efficient secret service. And, thanks to the efforts of Mr Birrell, the secret service in Ireland had practically disappeared.

So that the Northern Government, in addition to building up a new police force, had to organise a secret service—a service which it is nearly impossible to improvise in a short time.

It is almost unbelievable how many unfortunate people have had to suffer for the sins and omissions of a "ruler" like Augustine Birrell.

Owing largely to the dope Press in England, which invariably tried to make out that every crime committed in Ulster was of a political nature, the English people have confused the ordinary criminal acts of hooligans in a large industrial city like Belfast with the outrages of the gunmen, and have been taught to believe that every crime there is of a political nature.

Many of these crimes are the secondary results of the

Sinn Fein conspiracy—the party and individual feuds and vendettas which have been responsible for so many murders.

Also it must be remembered that many of the armed hold-ups in Belfast are the result of the stagnation of trade and industry and the resultant unemployment. But, on the other hand, it has been proved from captured documents, &c., that the hold-ups involving thousands of pounds have been the work of gunmen acting under orders of the I.R.A.

Gunmen, like Specials, are an expensive luxury, and have to be paid. The pay of a gunman serving on a flying column in Ulster was the same as a special constable—£3, 10s. a week.

Add this outbreak of hooliganism to the outrages and sabotage of the professional I.R.A. gunmen, and you have a stiff task set for the Northern Government to restore law and order.

They had seen law and order disappear completely in the South; and in the early days of 1922 law and order in the North were perilously near disappearing point.

When the Northern Government started to function, the Loyalists of Ulster had pretty nearly reached the limit of human endurance at the hands of the Sinn Fein gunmen. Luckily they did not know that worse was to come; and many times, after some peculiarly atrocious crime, a violent outbreak on the part of the

shipyard workers appeared imminent.

Time after time these fine men controlled themselves in spite of the extreme provocation they received. They realised that if they took vengeance on the Shinnners they would be playing into the hands of the enemy. Nothing would have suited the Publicity Department in Dublin better than an outbreak of this kind. Consider the magnificent advertisement the dope Press in England would have given Sinn Fein. Great headlines telling the English people of the brutal outrages committed by savage Orange mobs on innocent Roman Catholics in Belfast!

But one wonders how English miners and Clyde shipyard workers would appreciate being bombed by Reds when on their way home in tramcars from their work,—would they take such treatment lying down?

Unfortunately for some time a small extreme section of the Government's supporters appeared to consider that the Shinner was to be delivered into their hands. It was a case of God save us from our friends: so much so that at one time the Northern Government were more hampered by the efforts of the extreme section of their supporters than by those of the Sinn Fein gunmen.

Among minor problems, the Northern Government had to make their people understand that the sympathy and support of the English people was abso-

lutely necessary if Ulster was ever to make any headway as a self-governing province.

Having seen the betrayal of the Southern Loyalists, the Ulster people knew well that the Imperial Government would not hesitate to deliver Ulster over to the same fate if it suited their political aims. And they were right—an effort was very soon made.

Lloyd George's Border Commission was nothing more nor less than an underhand effort to break up the Six Counties by handing over Fermanagh and Tyrone, and possibly the city of Derry, to the South; the remaining part of Ulster would then—so it was expected—fall an easy victim to the concentrated pressure of Sinn Fein and the Imperial Government.

Quite a clever scheme, but fortunately too great a betrayal for the British people to swallow, and the plot had perforce to be shelved, though only temporarily.

The Border Commission plot, however, had one good result unforeseen by Lloyd George—

it opened the eyes of the Ulster people to what they were up against. Moreover, it made them determined to resist Sinn Fein and, if necessary, the Imperial Government to the bitter end.

Further, it made them begin to realise that, if once they could prove that Ulster was able and had the good will to govern fairly and without favour to any section and to restore law and order, they would win the sympathy and support of the British people, which, once won, they need no longer fear Sinn Fein or the Imperial Government.

The Northern Government has been greatly hampered by the persistent refusal of the Roman Catholics in the North to take any part in the government of the country.

The refusal of Roman Catholic members to take their seats in the Northern Parliament has been used as propaganda against Ulster, the allegation being that these Roman Catholics are afraid of the Orangemen; the truth is that they are afraid of the Sinn Fein gunmen.

II. POSITION IN 1922.

In the early months of 1922 the position of Ulster grew steadily worse and worse. The Loyalists gave no outward sign of their great anxiety, but one could read it in the eyes of the people in the streets, and there was a feeling of high tension in the air.

Civil war between the North and the South seemed inevitable; and the Northern Government made honest endeavours to come to an agreement with the South, only to find as ever that it is impossible to strike any reasonable bargain with a

Celt when he thinks he is top dog.

In old days the Southern Irish used that cruel weapon, the boycott, with good results, but only in a small way. It has remained for the present generation to apply this economic weapon on a big scale in their attempt to ruin Ulster by a national boycott.

The South has placed great hopes in this boycott, probably because it invariably proved successful when dealing with some isolated landlord or shopkeeper; but it is very doubtful if the boycott would ever bring Ulster to her knees.

The chief industries of Ulster are linen and shipbuilding; in addition, there are large wholesale firms who act as the chief distributing agents for many English goods—tea, sugar, flour, boots, &c.—for all Ireland.

The wholesale firms' trade was in Ireland, and largely in the South; but all the world buys ships and linen from the North—their ships are equal to any, and their linen the finest in the world.

The boycott might ruin the wholesale firms, but has only driven the linen and shipbuilding firms to seek fresh markets. South America is a new and growing market for Ulster linen.

And as the former firms employ few hands and the latter thousands, the effects of the Southern boycott are only felt by a very small percentage of the population.

The boycotters now redoubled their efforts to ruin Ulster, be-

cause she refused to submit to Sinn Féin. A systematic search of all shops in Dublin and elsewhere in the South was made, and all goods from the North either stolen or burnt. Thousands of pounds were taken from Belfast firms having shops in Dublin. All the whisky of a large Belfast distillery in bond in Dublin was taken, the casks smashed, and the spirit allowed to flow in the gutters.

Goods trains, directly they crossed the Border coming from Ulster, were held up and searched, and anything and everything of Ulster origin taken out and either stolen or burnt.

Formerly the West got all its coffins from Belfast by train, but Belfast coffins were now burnt, and at one time there was a coffin famine in the West.

Men were specially employed in Dublin to visit every shop and see that no Ulster article of any kind was offered for sale. These men had a playful little trick of stopping pedestrians and demanding their cigarette-cases for inspection. If a case contained cigarettes manufactured in Ulster or England, these facetious inspectors promptly produced a large pair of tailor's scissors and removed one leg of the offender's trousers.

Later on in the year, when civil war broke out in the South and the country gradually sank into a state of chaos and anarchy, it did not really matter whether the boycott was on or off. The transportation

of goods became practically impossible owing to the looting of the Irregulars.

During the early months of the year, the gunmen, taking full advantage of the disorganised state of the police in Ulster owing to the change from the R.I.C. to the R.U.C., redoubled their efforts to create panic in Belfast and Ulster generally.

A complete system of snipers' posts was organised throughout Belfast, district by district, which would be manned in turn, and a steady sniping kept up for hours on all Loyalists who passed within range. And generally, before the snipers vacated their posts, they would indulge in a "mad minute" in order to loose off all their ammunition, and for a time the streets in the whole neighbourhood would be swept by bullets.

English readers will at once exclaim—But why not catch the snipers or shoot them? And if you can't locate them, why not surround the district with a double cordon of troops and police and search every house?

The answer is that it has been done time after time, and the results have always been most meagre.

After some years of varied experience in Dublin and Belfast, the professional gunmen have brought the selection of their posts to a fine art. It may be a slate in the roof raised a few inches at will, and then lowered again after a shot; a chimney-stalk, from

behind which a sniper is invisible except from a 'plane; a cunning hole through the top of a curtain; the fanlight over a door, or a loophole through a tradesman's sign-board. There is no end to a sniper's ingenuity.

It is quite impossible to locate shots by sound or flash during daylight, and nearly as hard at night, unless you happen to be looking straight at the flash.

You are certain that you have spotted a house, and make a rush for it. The door will either not be opened, or else some one (generally a woman or child) will start fumbling with the lock; in either case there is a delay. And even if you smash in the door straight away, the sniper still has time to clear.

There are passages through the walls of every house (some hidden, and others just gaping holes) in these human rabbit-warrens, and even through the walls of the back-yards; and on these occasions every back door is left ajar by orders of the I.R.A. Further, in many streets a man can travel a mile without leaving the roofs.

You search the house, and only find terrified women and children cowering in the corners of dark rooms—not a sign of a man; probably you pass over a youthful sniper dressed as a girl, his head covered up by the usual shawl.

If by a lucky chance you find a man—probably snoring in bed, but dressed in shirt and

trousers—you won't find any arms on him: he has already transferred his revolver, automatic, or even carbine to some female accomplice.

To search a house for a small .38 automatic is like looking for a daisy on a grouse mountain—you will have to tear up all the woodwork and pull down the stairs and chimneys if you are to succeed.

Women have played a large part in the different I.R.A. crimes in Belfast, as they did formerly in the days of the Auxiliaries in the South, and without an army of women searchers it is impossible to stop their activities.

Sentence of death is passed at an I.R.A. "court-martial" (needless to say, the victim is not present to defend himself) on some prominent Loyalist, and the carrying out of the "execution" is delegated to a certain execution squad—the official I.R.A. term for a gang of youthful gunmen who pose as the executioners of the I.R.A.

This squad decide on a certain street, probably frequented by the unfortunate Loyalist every day at a certain hour.

If the squad (always distinguished by some sign, such as a red silk handkerchief peeping out of their breast pockets, or green mufflers of a peculiar hue) were to carry the execution instruments to the scene of the execution on their persons, they would run the grave danger of bumping into some brutal Specials—a horrible idea.

So the procedure is for these gallant executioners to stroll down the street hands in pockets and fags in mouths, but unarmed. Behind them walk their girls with the revolvers under their shawls.

The Loyalist for death appears, and the girls quickly pass the revolvers to the executioners. These brave lads first have a good look round to see that no Specials are near, then creep up behind their victim and "execute" him in the back.

Directly the execution has been carried out the arms are at once handed back to the girls, who run off terrified at the shooting; while the executioners, hands in pockets, stroll off coolly in another direction. Or they may elect to stand their ground, and when the police rush up will be found rendering first aid to their victim.

And this is how the I.R.A. carry out Sinn Fein "justice"!

When a tram, full of unarmed shipyard workers hurrying home after a hard day's work, or Loyalist women and children, is to be bombed, a girl carries the bomb to the scene of execution, and some brave fellow throws it from behind a screen of women.

Few things are more wearying than the continued loss of sleep night after night and week after week; and the gunmen saw to it that the citizens of Belfast enjoyed as little sleep as possible.

The signal would be given by a single shot in a certain

district just as the inhabitants were composing themselves to sleep, to be followed at irregular intervals throughout the night by single shots and volleys. Sinn Fein propaganda informed the world that all this shooting was carried out by Specials with the wind up, giving as the proof that only Crown forces had access to the streets during Curfew hours. They omitted to mention that a man can fire a shot out of a window as easily as he can in a street.

The Northern Government brought several additional platoons of A Specials into Belfast. They soon had the gunmen under control, and the city was comparatively quiet.

The I.R.A. in Dublin then created a diversion by attacking the Ulster Border at various points, and carrying off a number of prominent Loyalists into captivity in the South.

This act of war had the desired effect of forcing the Northern Government to take most of the platoons out of Belfast to protect the Border; and once more the gunmen in Belfast had a free hand.

There followed a long period of so-called Border fighting: in reality a series of raids on Ulster territory organised, but disavowed, by the G.H.Q. of the I.R.A. in Dublin.

A mob of gunmen would collect close to the Border, and for days amuse themselves sniping police and Loyalists in Northern territory. Then one night they would sneak across the Border, with local Shinners

as guides, and raid and shoot up isolated Loyalist farmers, taking good care to be safe across the Border before day broke.

If these mobs felt extra brave they would fire volleys, always from cover, at a safe distance, at some isolated post of Specials. One looks in vain in the accounts of these attacks for a single instance where the attack was carried out with determination, and ending in an assault at the point of the bayonet. No; the gunman has no use for the cold steel.

For months the Loyalists near the Border lived in a state of terror, and well might they curse the name of Lloyd George for bringing this misery into their lives. They never knew when they might be sniped from across the Border by day, nor which night they might be raided and probably murdered—I mean “executed.”

The Specials were few in number, while the Border was long, and geographically an impossible one to defend.

The gunmen were bound by no known laws, while the Specials were, with the result that the gunmen could take the offensive where, when, and how they liked, while the Specials had always to remain on the defensive. An impossible position for any force, and the marvel is how they held the Border so long and so well.

However, the gunmen lost their taste for Border “fighting” after the battle of Pettigo—a battle truly worthy of a

place in the list of decisive Irish battles, if in no other list.

The turn of the tide came at last with the coming of Sir Henry Wilson, not only as a result of his advice, but also from the feeling of confidence all ranks had in this fine fearless soldier. And none realised better than Sinn Fein what a tower of strength he was likely to prove to Ulster.

And with the turn of the tide came a growing confidence in the Northern Government; for men saw by now that they meant to govern, and had no intention of being governed.

The British Empire owed much to Sir Henry Wilson, but the finest deed he ever did was when he gave his life

to save Ulster—at present the keystone of the Empire.

And with the growing confidence of the Loyalists came a loss of confidence in the ranks of Sinn Fein, and a gradual slackening of their efforts in the Six Counties.

The fighting in the South appeared to take the heart out of the Shinnners in the North. Information of the right sort began to reach the authorities—always a sure sign of the beginning of a break-up in an Irish rebellion.

Then followed the exodus of the gunmen from Ulster; and so we come to the time when Ulster at last had a chance to put her house in order, and prepare for the second round if it ever comes.

III. THE ULSTER SPECIALS.

People often wonder, when they hear the R.I.C. praised as the finest police force in the world, why it was that they failed to put it across the I.R.A.

There are three reasons for the failure of the R.I.C. at the beginning of the S.F. rebellion: first, and most important reason of all, because police should never be called upon to deal with armed rebellion—it is work for soldiers; next, Birrell had reduced the police secret service (the eyes and ears of every police force) to a useless minimum; and lastly, because they were not properly armed and equipped for the work they were called upon to carry out.

But though the R.I.C. were

nearly swept away before they were stiffened with Black and Tans and rearmed, yet their discipline held in a marvellous way, the result of the splendid training they had received.

And this is all the more wonderful when it is remembered that the Shinnners and the R.I.C. were often brothers and cousins, that the R.I.C. had to resist the threats of their priests, the cajoleries of their own womenkind, and even the curses of their own parents.

The Southern Irishman makes an ideal policeman if caught young and well trained—you will find him in every English-speaking police force in the world; but the Northern Irish-

man has never taken kindly to police work, at any rate in peace time.

During the troublous times of the last two years in the North the Ulsterman has, however, turned out to be a fine war-time policeman, but then he has been nine-tenths a soldier and one-tenth a policeman; it remains to be seen how he will stand the monotony of a policeman's life, if ever there is peace again in the North and the Shinner ceases from troubling.

Three classes of Special Constabulary were formed, called A, B, and C.

The A's, the smallest force, were whole-time men, and as fast as they were recruited and trained, they were formed into platoons of, roughly, sixty men, with two officers and a head constable.

Each platoon was a completely self-contained unit, and worked independently. The men were armed with service rifles, bayonets, and '45 revolvers. Each platoon had one Lewis gun, and carried hand- and rifle-grenades. For transport they had Crossley tenders and Lancia cage cars, and were very mobile.

The A's were practically all ex-soldiers—most of them had served in the famous Ulster Division in France,—and were well up to the high standard of the best fighting troops. The men from the country districts of the counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone were especially fine men in a very fine lot. In a word, the A's

were the shock troops of the Ulster force, and any British officer might have been proud to command a platoon of them.

The B's corresponded to the special constables enrolled in London during the war. Service—occasional duty in a district convenient to each member, usually one night a week exclusive of training drills; day duty not required except in emergency.

The B's were citizens with a high sense of patriotic duty, who volunteered to do the ordinary street patrol duties of a policeman without pay. Many of them were long past the age when a man cares to turn out on a dirty winter's night; but they carried on with their monotonous, and often dangerous, work—often after a hard day's work in the office or on the land—all through the winter of 1921-22 without flinching. Really the most patriotic of all the Specials.

The C's were at first merely reinforcements for the A's, but were soon formed into a separate force, and used largely to supplement the work of the A's. Practically all were ex-service men with good war-service records.

The 31st May was fixed as the date for the final disbandment of the R.I.C., and the formation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Every Roman Catholic member of the R.I.C. received threatening letter after letter—their wives were also subjected to this cowardly form

of terrorism—to the effect that, if they did not resign, or if they joined the R.U.C., they would be assassinated.

These unfortunate men appealed to their priests to denounce this savage vendetta. The priests made no sign, and many resigned and were even forced to fly the country.

After the final disappearance of the R.I.C. the only obstacle which stood between the gunmen and their prey was the Special Constabulary; and if this force had cracked, the fate of Belfast and the whole of Ulster would have been too awful to contemplate.

But the Specials did not crack, largely because they are fine men, but also because they are supported by a Government which does not let its loyal servants down.

The gunmen, cocksure of victory now—hadn't they chased the British Army and Government, not to mention the R.I.C., out of Ireland?—announced openly that they would shoot the Specials off the streets of Belfast, and then deal with the rest in other parts of Ulster.

It is perfectly true that they did murder *one* unfortunate Special Constable—shot him treacherously in the back when he was on duty at a street corner, and also wounded his companion.

The end of that story is best told by quoting a letter which appeared some time afterwards in the 'Morning Post.'

"TERRORISM IN BELFAST.

"HOW THE MURDER GANG LEFT FOR THE SOUTH.

"To the Editor of the
'Morning Post.'

"SIR,—It has been said, and very generally believed, that the extreme Unionists in Belfast were as much to blame as the Irish Republicans for the murder and disturbances which have afflicted that city until a month ago, when all these outrages suddenly ceased. The following fact will demonstrate where the real origin of these orgies of crime was centred.

"A long train of the Great Northern of Ireland Railway Company was drawn up at the Belfast railway terminus, and was timed to leave for Dublin at 4.30 P.M. About ten minutes before its departure dozens of young well-dressed men, with bulging pockets, gradually appeared and occupied every seat in the train, even the corridors of the carriages and the dining-saloons. The number travelling could not have been fewer than 200.

"It was a remarkable departure, and greatly impressed the railway authorities, but, strange to say, made no impression on the Northern Government or the military. If it had done so one of the greatest hauls of infamous Bolshevik murderers would have been made. Having inflicted untold miseries on the people of Belfast, they left that city to aid their partners in crime in other parts of Ireland.

"At the time the gang invaded the Belfast railway station there may have been some doubt as to their identity, but there was no doubt in a few hours after their departure. Some of the men were recognised on the platform, and their bulging pockets actually seen to hold revolvers. They were also plentifully supplied with money, and left Belfast because they had done as much damage as they could safely effect, and because their co-partners in guilt required their attendance in other parts of Ireland. It is possible that these scoundrels may return to Belfast later; if so, the authorities should be on the watch, and take steps to prevent their re-entry.

"The 'Morning Post' is blamed for its truth-telling. Nothing I have ever read in your most estimable journal at all approaches the ghastly reality, which will pursue the record of this Government and its chief members throughout the pages of history.—Yours, &c.

"Independent Nationalist.

"August 11th."

Since this hurried retreat of the Southern gunmen, and with them a good many of their Northern partners, Belfast has enjoyed a period of peace.

Many of the Northern gunmen went south when the fighting started there, thinking they were going to have a high old time of it; but they were not received with the

enthusiasm they had expected. Unpleasant questions were asked of them, and the "officers" were required to serve in the ranks, to their great disgust.

Many of them then drifted into the ranks of the Irregulars, whose ideas of military discipline they found more congenial, and where any man was free to assume whatever rank he fancied. Others, less bellicose, posed as R.C. refugees from Belfast, hunted from their houses by brutal Orange mobs. These were "billeted" on Protestant families in Dublin and other parts of the country, some even getting so far south as Cork; and here they stayed, their unfortunate "hosts" having to provide them with food and drink.

Mr Cosgrave let the cat out of the bag recently during a discussion in the Dail on the question of demanding compensation from the Northern Government for refugees from the Six Counties. He admitted that a large proportion of these refugees were able-bodied young men, and large numbers of them had joined the Irregulars. Mr O'Shannon: "And the National Army too." President Cosgrave: "I think not. There are not very many by any means. I could give you some facts as to that. We have never encouraged these young men to *fly from their responsibilities in the Six Counties.*"

At one time the Propaganda Department in Dublin worked the great refugee ramp for all

it was worth in order to fool the English people that the Roman Catholics in the North were being persecuted by the Orangemen.

It now appears that the chief result of this campaign of lies has been to provide Rory O'Connor with a number of recruits, and these interesting victims of religious persecution in the North have most probably carried out the great destruction of public and private property in the South, for which enormous claims for compensation are now rolling in to the consternation of the Free State Government. A boomerang with a vengeance.

It is true that reports have been put about in England and Ireland to the effect that the Imperial Government would meet these claims; but this was probably with an idea of seeing how the English public would take the idea.

The Publicity Department in Dublin would have often been very hard up for copy if they had not had the Ulster Specials to fall back upon, and they have not spared the Specials, on paper. Sinn Fein propaganda has always proved a useful indicator of the fortunes of Sinn Fein. When, for short intervals—always too short—the R.I.C. and British Army were allowed to get down to business, the wails of Sinn Fein propaganda resounded throughout the world. And so it has been with the Specials, but the wail has been very prolonged.

The Ulster Special Constabulary have saved Ulster from the Shinner and the Bolshevik; and one day the future historian will write that they saved the British Empire at a time when British politicians did their best to lose it.

IV. A COMPARISON WITH THE SOUTH.

On the anniversary of the treaty between the Imperial Government and Sinn Fein a comparison between the state of the North and South of Ireland is both interesting and instructive.

The greater part of the English Press does its best, by ignoring bad news and magnifying good out of recognition, to make the people believe that all is well with the Free State; and that, if they are only given sufficient arms, artillery, 'planes, military equipment, and

money, and long enough time, the Provisional Government will produce a new and prosperous country, famous for its passionate loyalty to King and Empire.

The Free State military censor has also something to say to the Irish news dished up for English readers.

About the North the English Press has little or no information to give its readers, except to magnify some sordid hold-up by hooligans into a religious riot.

The ignorance in England with regard to the state of the North is shown by the following circular, which has recently been received by merchants in the North of Ireland from manufacturers and merchants in various parts of Great Britain: "Owing to the unsettled state of Ireland, we are now obliged to make the terms cash with order," &c.

Further, officials of railway companies in Great Britain, on the pretext of "the unsettled state of Ireland," refused to accept consignments of merchandise for Belfast and district.

The truth is that Ulster is as safe and quiet as any part of England at the present time, and will continue so as long as the South refrains from interfering with the North; moreover, the financial stability of the mercantile community in Ulster is intact.

English merchants and railway companies impose the same conditions on goods for the South, and rightly; the Englishman trusts his own common-sense before his Press when his pocket is touched.

But in spite of the dope Press in England and the Free State military censor in Ireland, the truth about the real state of the South is gradually filtering through—first to the North, and then more gradually to England. And as time goes on the news gets worse and the tellers more despondent.

Men who have left the South for good, and men who are only on a visit and must perforce

return to the South again, or their businesses or farms will be ruined or lost—all agree that the Free State will never function. They don't say that it is in being and will probably fade away, but that it has never functioned (except in name), and never will—that the miracle is an utter impossibility.

Protestants and Roman Catholics, Unionists and Nationalists, all tell the same tale when they are away from the South and not afraid to say what is in their minds.

From every district in the South comes the same tale of outrages, looting, arson, and murder—of shops looted time and again, of country-houses burnt to the ground, of demesnes and large farms taken from the owners and divided amongst the landless members of the Transport Union, and of bank robberies of thousands of pounds. Even the Roman Catholic clergy who have done their duty and denounced murder, outrage, and arson, are threatened.

The majority of the people, *with any stake in the country*, are praying for the return of the British; they realise too late that they did not know when they were well off in the good days when the R.I.C. and the British Army afforded protection to all law-abiding citizens.

It is the old story of the "haves" and "have nots": the "haves," in the form of shopkeepers and farmers, praying for the return of the British because they want to keep

their goods and lands from the clutches of the "have nots"; the latter determined to make the anarchy and chaos in the country worse in order that they may become "haves." And the "have nots" are armed, and the "haves" are not.

It is quite true that the Southern Irish at heart are not in favour of the murder gang or its methods; but then the murder gang is armed, and well armed, and the Southern Irish are unarmed.

The Irish people in the South now find themselves under a yoke far more oppressive and tyrannical than the so-called British yoke; and they know that there is worse to come.

In the North there is no more difficulty in collecting a debt than there would be in England; in the South it is quite impossible to collect a debt if the debtor refuses to pay.

And at the present time in the South the country people in many districts refuse to pay for anything they buy in a shop.

At one period a countryman had his choice of two so-called Courts of Law, the Provisional Government Courts and those of the Republicans; now there are practically no Courts, and even if there are, nobody pays any heed to their decisions outside of Dublin.

Taking full advantage of this state of affairs, the country people, knowing that they cannot be sued, find it much more pleasant and convenient to do their shopping on the unlimited

credit system; and if a shopkeeper objects, the countryman threatens to take his patronage elsewhere.

This is one of the worst signs of the times in the South. The shopkeepers are between the devil and the deep blue sea. If they stock their shops they have two alternatives, which really amount to the same result in the end. They may either be looted by Irregulars, or if they manage to escape this fate they may sell their goods to the country people. In each case they receive no money in return.

Their alternative is not to stock their shops at all, and to keep their money in a hiding-place (they are afraid to put it in the banks). The Irregulars will then relieve them of their money.

A curious position, and one not to be found in Ulster; and the shopkeepers can hardly be wondered at if they are now cultivating a "passionate loyalty" to the British Empire.

Probably one of the best tests of the condition of a country is the administration of the law, and here a comparison between the North and South is most significant.

For a long time past the legal position in Southern Ireland has been a pure farce, and such as no other country would put up with.

The Provisional Government explains the nature of this farce in the following announcement:—

"Great inconvenience has been caused by the existence

of two sets of Courts, and competition between them has tended to bring the administration of justice in Ireland into disrepute. In many cases a plaintiff selected for his proceedings the Court which, for political and other reasons, would be an unfavourable venue for his opponent, whereupon the latter set the other Court in motion to restrain the proceedings so commenced, and try to force the plaintiff out of the Court he had selected. These injunctions had become a *subject of public amusement*."

This was bad enough, but as bad was to follow. The Provisional Government set up their Courts, and the Republicans followed suit with theirs; and again we saw the ludicrous sight of two different sets of Courts trying to function at one and the same time in the South.

As might be expected, men again went to whichever Court suited them, and the same case might be "tried" in two different Courts on the same day.

And in the end the law continued to be a farce in the South, and a "subject of public amusement."

"Decisions" are freely given, but there is no one to enforce them, and the law is a dead letter.

The Law Lists of both Courts appeared in the Dublin Press on each day, while the Republican "Judges" went on circuit leaving the Provisional Government's Judges idle at the Four Courts. Then the Four Courts disappeared in smoke and flame.

Take the case in Ulster, a very different story. The King's writ runs in every part of the Six Counties, and has never ceased to run for a single day. The High Court, the Assizes, the Quarter Sessions, and the Petty Sessions have never ceased to function. Dail Eireann "Courts," if they exist at all, are carried on secretly underground.

The Six Northern Counties and Derry are now one compact circuit, which the Judges travel to maintain the authority of the King's Courts.

The Supreme Court of Northern Ireland has been a brilliant success; the Provisional Government has started sending its Judges to prison, and described one recently in the Dail as "an old cod."

The following interesting incident may give English readers a good idea of the extraordinary conditions under which people in the South of Ireland are living to-day, and some idea of the terrible destruction of roads and public property in the shape of bridges, railways, &c.

About fifteen miles due north of Athlone, in the county of Roscommon, there is a mean little village called Knockcroghery: possibly the name may be remembered in connection with the murder of General Lambert, G.O.C. at Athlone, as afterwards about half the village was razed as a military reprisal. Knockcroghery is on the M.G.W. Railway, about half-way between the town of Roscommon and Athlone, and

thence in direct communication with Dublin by the main line.

In normal times the village draws all its supplies by rail from Dublin without any difficulty except the usual delay on a Southern railway and the exorbitant rates of freight. Recently, however, the village found itself without a single bag of flour, and worse still, every road in all directions was trenched and impassable, and the railway blown up.

Lough Ree and the river Shannon being impassable, all communication with the outer world was cut off to the eastward, and so the villagers started exploring to the west.

In time they discovered that they could reach the little seaport of Ballina in the north of Co. Mayo, about seventy-five miles to the N.N.W., without having to cross any large bridge, though they soon lost count of the trenches across the roads, and so opened up communication with the outer world by sea.

Flour was then brought in carts by road to Knockeroher. The first cart would bring the bags of flour to the first impassable trench across the roads. The bags would then be carried over the trench to a second waiting cart, and so on across the innumerable trenches the whole way from Ballina to Knockeroher.

The machinery of modern life is so complicated and in-

tricate that, once it has been put completely out of gear, as it has been in Southern Ireland, it will probably be beyond the power of an Irish Government to set it in order again.

Only a Military Dictator, of iron will and purpose, could accomplish the herculean task of clearing up Lloyd George's terrible mess in Southern Ireland.

Moreover, if Lloyd George and the Southern gunmen had had their way, Ulster would today be in the same state of anarchy and chaos.

The Southern Loyalist will soon be a type of the past, and no longer a source of annoyance to the Imperial Government.

Not so long ago Lloyd George proclaimed to the world his horror and detestation at the terrible atrocities committed by the Turks in Smyrna. We are still waiting for his denunciation of the equally terrible and savage atrocities committed by the gunmen on the Southern Loyalists of Ireland.

Some of these Loyalists will probably escape to a far country to carry with them an undying hatred and a bitter contempt for their English cousins who, in their hour of need, returned their love and loyalty with treacherous betrayal and desertion. And this hatred and contempt will be handed down from generation to generation by their descendants in many countries.

V. THE FUTURE.

The future of Ulster to a certain extent depends on what happens in the South during the next twelve months, possibly sooner: and it would be well first to review the situation and the possibilities of what may happen in that most distressful country.

News from the South is scarce owing to the almost complete lack of communications there, and unreliable, owing to the strict censorship of the Provisional Government; but gradually some idea of the state of the country districts can be gathered.

There can be no doubt, from captured documents, that early in 1922 the South had formed great plans to conquer Ulster by every kind of pressure, direct and indirect, known to the I.R.A.; but, being strictly true to type, they could not stick together long enough to get down to the common foe, Ulster, but must start fighting amongst themselves.

And it is this civil war in the South which has been the temporary salvation of Ulster, and given her a good chance to prepare for the future, whatever it may bring forth.

Always in Ireland there are wheels within wheels, and English people completely fail to grasp the inner meaning of the so-called fighting going on intermittently in the South, or what the results may mean to themselves in the future.

On the surface it would

appear that the Provisional Government, who profess to stand for the treaty with England (in reality twisters all), have formed a National Army and Civic Guard (at the expense of the good old British taxpayer) in order that they may deal with the Republicans (also largely armed and equipped at the expense of the same obliging beast of burden, but not paid by him), who are determined to set up an Irish Republic.

The National Army when they are not in bed are endeavouring to subdue the Republicans by great sweeps over large areas; and when they make a haul of prisoners, proceed to shake them by the hand and release them, bidding them be good boys and go home.

The Republican Army are relying on the methods of the I.R.A., which proved so successful against the British Army—ambush, murder, &c.

This is a general idea of the picture presented by Lloyd George's dope Press to the English; and the heart of the simple-minded Englishman goes out to this gallant National Army, which is fighting with all its might and main to keep Ireland in her niche in the gallery of the British Empire.

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning, though not mentioned in the dope Press of England, that the South is rapidly pass-

ing into a state of anarchy and chaos. In isolated parts in the far West and South the passing is complete, and the countryside is "ruled" by armed bands of Bolshevik bandits who prey on the inhabitants.

The chief aim of the Republicans (called by the Provisional Government Irregulars) is to destroy all means of communication in the country—railways, roads, canals, bridges, &c.—in order that they may make it impossible for the Provisional Government to move troops about or ration those any distance from a seaport.

But this destruction also means that no fairs can be held, and farmers can sell no stock; also, it is impossible to provide inland towns any distance from Dublin or a seaport with food.

The murders, outrages, and robberies committed daily and nightly on the Southern Loyalists are mere details, hardly worth mentioning in these days of Lloyd George's super-statecraft—they must learn to suffer for the good of the country!

Now to look below the surface. With an insignificant minority all the Celtic population of the South is republican at heart: but with this important difference—for, whereas the "haves" want an Irish Republic much on the lines of the U.S.A., on the other hand the "have nots" will be satisfied with nothing less than a Soviet Republic exactly on the lines of Russia,—possibly they have some ideas already of improving on the Russian effort from a Bolshevik point of view.

Practically all the rank and file of the Republican "Army" are "have nots" and Bolsheviks; and yet there are more "have nots" in the ranks of the National Army, but they are not Bolsheviks—at least not yet.

The great majority of the youths in Southern Ireland have never done an honest month's work in their lives: for the last two or three years they have been members of the I.R.A., and when not paid out of the ample funds of that organisation or the funds of the White Cross, have paid themselves out of Irish banks or shops.

These youths are all determined that they will never settle down to the monotonous life of an ordinary farm labourer as long as there is plenty of spoil in the country: they prefer to take it from Loyalist Protestants, but are quite ready to treat the Nationalist Roman Catholics in the same manner if the necessity arises.

The English reader at once asks—Why do not all the "have nots" in both armies join forces and divide the spoil?

And the answer is, that the British Government (the good old beast of burden, the British taxpayer, comes into the picture once more) are *paying*, rationing, equipping, and arming the National Army; but though they have armed and equipped the Republican Army to a great extent, or rather the Republicans took

the arms from them, they do not *pay* them.

The Provisional Government can have no funds of their own by now (it would be interesting to know how much they owe to the Bank of Ireland), and the amount of taxes collected during a half-year in the South at the present time would hardly keep the National Army and O'Duffy's Civic Guards in woodbines for a week.

The day the British Government ceases to pay the National Army the Free State Government collapses like a pricked bladder, and the real wild work starts in the South.

The National Army will then dissolve during a week-end, and the I.R.A. will come into its own at last. The reader can study any good account of modern life in Russia if he is anxious to know what will happen in Ireland then.

If these conditions arise in the near future, the chances are that Ulster will have nothing to fear from the South. The I.R.A. would rapidly break up into marauding tribes, which would prey on the country as long as there remained anything to prey on, and then start hammering each other. Possibly some of these tribes might make dashes across the Ulster Border, but they ought to be easy to deal with. The chances of a combined attack of the I.R.A. on Ulster under these conditions are very remote.

There still is a ghost of a chance that a superman may suddenly arise out of the mob of duds in the ranks of the

Provisional Government — a long-haired, wild-eyed group of tenth-rate clerks, National school teachers, farmers' sons, &c.—and succeed where Collins and Griffiths lost their lives; but in order to keep alive, this superman would have to live in a 'plane to escape assassination.

In this case Ulster would be certain to be attacked sooner or later from the South: even when the Provisional Government are on the verge of collapse, they cannot help threatening a "settlement" with Ulster as soon as they are in a position to carry it out.

Incidentally it may interest English people to know that, if the North and the South had come to grips in civil war, as undoubtedly at one time in 1922 the South intended to, the British taxpayer would have had an interesting civil war staged for his special benefit by Lloyd George & Co. And further, he would have had the intense satisfaction and pride of knowing that he was paying, arming, and equipping *both* sides in this super-statesman's film. The British taxpayer may yet enjoy this edifying sight.

Probably the British Government will continue to finance the National Army in the South at the expense of the British taxpayer, and the war will probably trail out some day to an indefinite conclusion, the only definite results being the complete ruin of Southern Ireland and the extermination of the Loyalists.

MY PARROT.

IF in my boyhood I thoroughly enjoyed the perusal of 'Robinson Crusoe,' it had certainly never occurred to me that in my old age I should find myself in much the same plight as was that adventurous hero. To be sure, I cannot claim that I am living on a desert island; but somehow or other a tiny and isolated village has many of the desert island's characteristics, and there are too many days whereon, like Crusoe, I am dependent for society on the presence of my animal friends. That was Aristotle, I fancy, who said that man was a social being. Man, too, has been defined as a featherless biped. Social, then, we may suppose that I may rank at all times, and I certainly am a biped, and, to the best of my belief, featherless. But the fact remains that on at least four days in the week my sociability seems to be extended to quadrupeds and feathered bipeds only; and my hours, like Crusoe's, are passed in the society of my parrot, my dog, and my goats. True—a veteran housekeeper to a certain extent fills the place of "Friday"; and though, were I to be attacked by a savage, she might not be able so far to follow Friday's example as to slay my attacker on the spot, I have every confidence that, like Punch's solitary watcher on the sea-shore,

she would have a d—d good try. So, too, I believe, would Mr Polly. For I prefer to give the old bird the masculine designation, simply on the ground that he has never been known to lay an egg, and I turn a deaf ear to those wiseacres who assure me that his devotion to myself is a feminine form of attachment. It may be that I have maligned Mr Polly in speaking of him as an old bird. But whether or no it be true that parrots live to be centenarians, all I know about his age is that he is far older than any other bird of my acquaintance, and has been my leal friend for close upon thirty years. I seem to forget how my prototype, Robinson Crusoe, originally annexed his parrot, but have a lively recollection of the manner in which my parrot practically annexed me. On a typical April morning, having sallied from my lodgings in Eastbourne with the intention of buying a macintosh, I was overtaken by a shower, and took refuge under an arcade. Thither, also in search of shelter, presently arrived a van full of parrots of all colours of the rainbow. At the instant of arrival there came a beseeching cry from the topmost cage on the van—

"Come up here, do!"

And I looked up to see a green and yellow bird fluttering

its wings in a state of anxious expectancy, having evidently addressed its remark to me. As the bird showed every sign of friendliness, I responded to the invitation, and, mounting the step of the van, commenced to scratch its head and talk to it, while it expressed its delight at my complaisance by fondling my hand and uttering a series of guttural but unintelligible sounds.

"You must buy that parrot, Mister," announced the proprietor of the van. "It have took quite a fancy to you."

Having no desire whatever to own a parrot, I refused the offer, and a minute or two later the rain stopped and the van moved on. This much to the dissatisfaction of the parrot, who continued to flutter his wings and issue invitations to me as long as I was in sight. Having bought my macintosh, I spent the morning strolling through the town, and some two hours later, when another sudden shower came on, sought shelter under another arcade, only to find that the parrot-man was already drawn up there. Again the same bird renewed its blandishments and invitations.

"You really had ought to buy that bird," said the man. "Never in my whole life have I seen one of my parrots take such a fancy to no one before."

Again I declined the offer, and then the man entered an *ad misericordiam* appeal.

"Look 'ee here, sir. I've not sold a single bird not in

this whole blessed town. Now, do 'ee make me an offer for it."

My offer, which I devoutly hoped would be refused, was not on a liberal scale.

"I'll give you thirty shillings for it."

And to my surprise—I might even say horror—the man closed with the offer at once, and I found myself saddled with a parrot, a thing which I had neither desired nor deserved, but with which as at this time I would not part for a hundred times the original price. If the saying which I have heard—that a parrot has only one love among mankind in its lifetime—holds good, there is no manner of doubt that I am this particular parrot's one and only love. To a few favoured individuals he may be said to be comparatively civil—to myself at all times he is demonstratively affectionate, recognising my footsteps at any distance, greeting my approach to his cage or stand with flutterings of wings and inarticulate murmurs of joy, and welcoming me with wild excitement and ceaseless chattering on my return after a long absence. When loose on his stand in the summer, if he chances to catch sight of me in the distance, he will descend at once, and proceed to waddle in his own singularly laborious gait in pursuit of me; and on several occasions when I have left him sitting on his perch and missed him on my return, I have discovered that the wise

old bird had worked his way round the house to my smoking-room, and finding the door open, entered the room, climbed on to the back of my particular chair, and was quietly sitting there awaiting my arrival. On two occasions when he has been at large in a first-floor room, on seeing me pass below he has hurled himself out of the window, to the imminent risk of destruction—for he was pinioned before he came into my possession and cannot fly a yard,—as if confident that I would do my best to catch him.

Time after time, when his perch has been carried out into the garden on a summer day, have I known him, by aid of beak and claw, laboriously climb to the ground and, waddling to my chair, make an equally laborious ascent until he has got close enough to my ear to murmur soft nothings into it. Latterly, indeed, this has become so far a habit with him that if I have my own reasons for not desiring his company, Polly has to be banished to the kitchen. To replace him on his perch is mere waste of time—that only puts the pertinacious old bird to the trouble of repeating his climbing performances.

Apart from myself, Polly seems to regard the majority of mankind with stolid indifference, bordering perhaps on dislike, and dire misfortune is apt to overtake that rash wight who, presuming on his apparent tameness, ventures to put a

hand or an arm within his reach. If the vicious peck wherewith he is wont to reward such an indiscretion comes off, a prolonged fit of chuckling betrays his satisfaction, while an unsuccessful attempt is commonly followed by a series of guttural remarks addressed to himself. Now and again, for reasons of his own, he so far admits womenkind into his confidence as to permit them to scratch his head and take other liberties with him; and my housekeeper, to whom in return for her constant care of him he really owes a debt of eternal gratitude, is rewarded for her solicitude by permission to rub his highness's leg on such occasions as he is afflicted with a touch of rheumatism. Once in a way, if she rubs too hard, a slight peck warns her of her indiscretion. But the old bird has grown wise enough to discover that, if that peck is harder than the occasion warrants, the wooden spoon which always lies handy during the rubbing process will be utilised for chastisement. Generally speaking, both bird and housekeeper may be said to live on the most friendly terms; but even in her case any attempt to handle or even approach Polly, if he is sitting on my hand or shoulder or so near me as to consider that he may claim companionship, is actively resented. It is no compliment to myself to remark that the only other trouser-wearing beings towards whom I have seen Polly display

real affection have been a particularly dour and ill-conditioned gardener once in my employ, and a very dirty and disreputable-looking being who acted as odd-job man at a shooting-box which I had in Wales. Naturally I have heard unkind people, my daughter among the number, suggest that the bird was apt to mistake gardener and odd-job man for myself. All I can say is that though one may be denied the power of "seeing ourselves as others see us," and though I do not claim to be better-mannered or better-looking than my neighbours, I may so far parody the Pharisee's prayer as to say that I am thankful that I am not either so ill-conditioned as the former or so unsavoury to behold as the latter. In the matter of years I will admit that the three of us are more or less on an equality, and it may be that Polly has a *soupçon* of respect for grey hairs.

Over four-footed animals Polly may fairly claim a quasi-moral ascendancy: this I am inclined to attribute to his powers of imitating the human voice. So long as I can remember, pretty well every dog and cat in the place has treated the bird with a respect not entirely unmingled with a form of timid curiosity, while he on his part has clearly regarded them as necessary and possibly well-meaning members of society. There came a day when, entering on the possession of a new house, I found

myself the inheritor of a huge sandy cat. Cats, those creatures that "walk alone," as we all know, are reputed to become more attached to premises than to individuals, and I take it that Sandy—for so we christened him—was no exception to the rule.

"Would you mind if we left our old cat here? He always lives out of doors, and only occasionally comes to the house to ask for food."

Such was the language of bequest employed by one of the spinster sisters whom I succeeded in the tenancy of my new home. I may add that Sandy's subsequent career led me to believe that up to the time of my arrival the entirely out-of-doors life had been a matter rather of necessity than choice. For he and I soon became fast friends, and he evidently preferred a seat on my arm-chair in the daytime, though he always petitioned to be allowed to wander abroad at nightfall. For the first week only he evidently entertained sinister designs against the parrot, and I had to take sundry precautions on the latter's behalf. But after that a marked change came over the scene. Could it have been that in some unguarded moment Sandy, having managed to insert a paw into Polly's cage, had discovered to his cost that parrots are uncanny creatures to meddle with, or was it a case of recognition of the old saying, "Love me, love my—parrot"? In

any case, bird and animal had established between themselves what at one time I took to be an armed neutrality, at another an *entente cordiale*. It used to amuse me to see that if the cat was lying by the fire and Polly was in a hurry to get to me, he would walk over rather than round the body of the cat, who never showed any sign of resenting the impertinence.

But, strange to relate, if only tolerant of and tolerated by the other four-footed animals of the establishment, Polly was wont to live on terms of the closest intimacy with my daughter's bulldog, and I am not quite sure that he did not love that highly-bred but eminently plain animal even better than he loved me. To be sure, poor dear Kim, who came to an untimely end, was as friendly and friend-making an animal as I ever saw, saving only that from his youth up he mistrusted and abhorred every other member of the dog-tribe, male and female alike. And that not without reason. For on the very first occasion when as a full-grown puppy he encountered an outside dog, a very pretty but uncertain-tempered she fox-terrier, he ran up and invited her to a game of play, whereupon the little cross-grained beast, whose sole excuse was that she was old enough to be his grandmother, promptly made her teeth meet in the tenderest part of his nose. Probably she entertained the idea that

the male animal's spirit of chivalry would revolt from retaliation. Poor deluded thing! She had indeed reckoned without her host. There was one loud roar of mingled pain and rage, and then she found herself lying on her back, pinned down by Kim's massive paws, with Kim's savage eyes glaring down upon her as if he were searching for the most vital point to attack. Though I managed to haul Kim off before any serious damage was done, I am convinced that he then and there swore vengeance on the whole canine race, and I never again saw him behave with ordinary civility towards any dog of any kind, no matter the age or sex. Singularly enough, if at war with his own species, he seemed to possess the power of making friends with every other type of four-footed animal, and I have seen him on one day standing in the centre of a quartette of cows, who grazed in my lower field, wagging his tail and inviting their rather sloppy carresses; on another day, sedulously licking the nose of an old horse which inhabited the upper field, and who on catching sight of the dog would come and thrust his nose through the railings for the express purpose of having it licked. Old Sandy, who actively disapproved of dogs as a class, made a special exception in favour of Kim, and casting aside the burden of years would play with him like a kitten; and though the old gentleman

was not chary with the use of his claws, if the game became too rough for his liking, within ten minutes of the slight disagreement which had followed the romping, dog and cat might be seen lying amicably in Kim's basket, with Polly perched on the rim making occasional remarks to them. For where Kim was, there Polly would fain be, and their mutual affection was as sincere as it was unusual. Polly's cage commonly stood on a small round table, and Kim, standing on his hind legs, would rest his fore-paws on the table and press his nose against the bars of the cage; whereupon Polly would descend from his perch, take the end of the nose gently in his beak, and fondle and croon over it in the same way that he would fondle and croon over my own finger or ear. Or again, if Kim was stretched at full length by the fireside and Polly was loose in the room, the bird would climb on to the dog's hind-quarters and plod his way to its head, never omitting to pull out any loose hair which he encountered. A slight shiver showed that Kim was sensible of the loss of the offending hair, but the steady thump-thump of his tail on the ground never ceased while the bird was on his back. So soon as he reached Kim's head Polly would play with the dog's ears much as a child will play with an elastic band, repeating over and over again the process of taking one end in his beak,

stretching the ear to full length, and then letting it go. And the continued thump-thump of the dog's tail seemed to indicate that he was enjoying the performance.

Many a time too did I watch the two friends taking a constitutional either on the lawn or gravel path, the dog, whose single step was about equivalent to ten of Polly's, always looking back and waiting till the bird was parallel with him before he moved on.

All lovers of dogs will know how prone the animal is to work off his superfluous spirits out of doors by a series of wild and aimless rushes. It was curious to see how consistently Kim, to whom this form of exercise especially appealed, managed in the course of what was apparently the blindest rush to steer clear of flower-beds and of Polly. Other things and people had to take their chances of a collision; and as he was both cumbrous and awkward and no respecter of persons, I once saw him bring to signal grief a distinguished general, against whose calves he had cannoned, and ten yards farther swerve just sufficiently to clear Polly, who was watching his friend's performance.

Before taking leave of poor Kim, I may add that the only times when Polly has ever been seriously angry with myself were when I used to pretend to beat his dear friend. On the instant that I raised my stick to the dog the bird would

fly into such a state of wild excitement, screeching out what I have always taken to be his native-land oaths at the top of his voice, ruffling his feathers, beating against the bars of his cage, and giving every possible sign of grave displeasure. I was always cautious not to put my hand within his cage for a full hour after one of these ebullitions, but I sometimes used to wonder whether Kim in his turn would have fallen under the ban of Polly's displeasure had the positions been reversed and the dog attacked his master. Curiously enough, Polly was never heard to articulate the word "Kim," though he has called one or two other dogs of his acquaintance by their names, and within the past week I am informed that he has taken to call Nellie, my spaniel. This may or may not be a step towards a new friendship, to which both my pets show signs of being inclined, and I am quite open to the belief that, were the two to find themselves on the floor together, they might come to some amicable arrangement. But as they are both very precious to me I have made up my mind to leave well alone, and not to indulge in a hazardous experiment.

Of the feathered tribe Polly has had a very limited experience. True, when he has been sitting in the garden the twitterings of inquisitive sparrows have seemed to annoy him, and I have heard him give vent to a cry either of alarm

or indignation when either sparrow or robin has had the presumption to fly too close to his head. Twice only in the course of thirty years' experience do I remember his being brought into touch—we must not press that word too closely—with a feathered biped. On the first occasion a neighbour going away on a holiday, and knowing that I was interested in birds, asked me to take care of his parrot, warranted to be a talker and good-tempered, during his absence. I consented to the arrangement, and with the idea that the two birds—which, as it happened, were wonderfully alike—might impart to each other a few fresh phrases, I put their cages about a yard apart and awaited developments. Nothing came, alas! in the way of an improved vocabulary, and I doubt whether there was much sense of companionship. To be sure, after the preliminary spreading of wings and short-step dances, indicative at all times of a friendly welcome, they almost simultaneously gave vent to the same greeting, "Hulloa! Polly," but that appeared to be the one and only remark that they had in common; and though I used often to listen at the door when both birds were talking at the top of their voices, I cannot pretend that there was either any interchange of ideas or bartering of phrases—it was simply a case of showing off to each other like two children. I may add that on my parrot's

part that "Hulloa! Polly," was the ordinary form of greeting extended to most members of my household, though in my own case it more often took the form of "Hulloa! father."

On the second occasion of encountering another bird Polly distinctly came out top. It chanced that I had a diminutive bantam game-cock, equally tame and pugnacious, equally ready at any time to fly on to my hand, with the idea of being fed or petted, or to attack my foot savagely if I pretended to kick it. One summer afternoon, on my way to tea in the garden, passing through the poultry-yard I fell in with the bantam, who, apparently surmising that there was some food handy, flew on to my hand and so accompanied me. It chanced that the parrot, who had also been invited to the party, was in his cage on the ground, handy to the tea-table. Not for a moment was the bantam disturbed by the sight of rather a large party of human beings. All his attention was concentrated on the parrot, that misshapen particoloured bird who had, as it were, dared to appear on his—the bantam's—royal domains without a passport. Such a trespasser should without delay be taught to know his proper place. And so the little cock—he was really not much bigger than the parrot—flew to the ground, flapped his wings, and crowed defiance. Then followed the usual scratchings on the

ground, searches for imaginary ears of corn, and stealthy advance, these being, as every poultry lover will know, the *sine qua non* preliminaries for a single combat *à l'outrance*. Finally, the sudden rush towards the cage, head lowered, wings partially extended, hackles erect. And what was Polly doing all the time? If not by any means so excited as the bantam, he was so far interested in the latter's arrival and performances as to descend from his perch, take up a position close to the bars of his cage, and stand there watching the bellicose demonstrations with his head on one side. Not till that final rush brought the bantam's head close to the cage did Polly vouchsafe any counter-manceuvre. Then, however, he leant forward and shouted in his most raucous voice almost into the bantam's ear, "Shut up!"—no bad remark under the circumstances. Never was an injunction more promptly obeyed. Probably for the first time in his life the bantam was frightened out of his wits. He had, indeed, been found ready, on the smallest provocation, to have it out with the biggest—ergo the clumsiest—cock in the yard, had been known to outface and overcome both dog and cat that approached too nearly to his harem—nay, even to assault the ankles of a fair maiden who had in some way offended him. But the sound of a human voice close to his ear, and emanating from a bird, was too much for

his nerves. He lowered his tail, turned his back, and simply ran for his life; while Polly, apparently rather disappointed by the effect of his remark, climbed back on to his perch, and sat there grumbling to himself.

Hitherto I seem to have dealt almost exclusively with Mr Polly's friendships. Let me devote a few words to what was, so far as I know, his sole standing antipathy. Where the public at large may be described as being warned off his premises, and the warning was now and again emphasised by a shrewd and most unpleasant peck, one person only did this weird bird literally persecute. How or why my dear friend C—— earned this distinction I am at a loss to determine. It was certainly not of his own seeking or deserts. For he was one of the kindest men in the world, almost as fond as I myself am of what we are pleased to call dumb animals, and the trusted friend of many of them. But his very appearance was that to Polly which a red rag is reputed to be to a bull, and I still seem to see the malevolent glare of the parrot's eyes whenever they caught sight of him. It became a standing amusement on an idle summer afternoon for C—— and myself to occupy two deck-chairs, set perhaps ten yards apart, and to have Polly sitting on his favourite position—*i.e.*, the top of my chair—within easy reach of my ear

and shoulder. He or she who adventured an attempt to remove the old warrior from such a position was indeed more than likely to reap the just reward of his or her interference, but apart from this I never remember Polly initiating an unprovoked attack. But on the instant that he caught sight of C—— preparations were made for invading the enemy's country, and descending from his perch Polly would laboriously waddle towards C——'s chair, muttering what we took to be maledictions in an unknown tongue. Those ten yards were to him—he was a terribly bad walker—what a mile might be to a man; but even so, if C—— moved his chair another ten—nay, even twenty yards away, just as the bird got within striking distance, the relentless pursuit continued. I have found myself wondering whether after a due exchange of blows that breach could ever have been healed over. For once upon a time there came to my house a week-end visitor towards whom, for reasons best known to himself, Polly displayed signs of marked hostility. This much to my visitor's amusement; but I had my misgivings when he announced his intention to stay at home on Sunday morning for the express purpose of making friends with "your nasty old parrot." On my return from church I found the bird sitting on his knee, and evidently on the best of terms with him.

"So you've made friends," I remarked.

"Oh yes, we're all right now. The old beast pecked me about fourteen times, but I boxed his ears each time till he got tired of the game, and said that he'd made a mistake. So I gave him a pod of peas, and now we're sworn friends, and he lets me do what I like with him." And with that by way of illustration he threw the bird in the air and caught him again, and to my astonishment, though the bird had to hold on to his sleeve with its beak on the return journey, it at once settled itself comfortably on his arm without showing any signs of resentment.

Lastly, about Polly's verbal accomplishments—or shall I call it his progress in the art of conversation? On the one hand, I am prepared to admit that many of the singularly appropriate answers given by the bird are pure matters of accident. Two of these may be placed on record, if only to illustrate how easily directions given by a parrot, a truly marvellous imitator of the human voice, might deceive the unwary.

A visitor, who always took a kindly interest in Polly and his remarks, had dropped in to tea on a summer afternoon. Presently, as the doors of the drawing-room and the passage leading to the back regions were open, we heard Polly's voice in the distance.

"Now, will Polly answer you

if you call to him?" inquired my guest.

"Of course he will," and with that I shouted, "Polly!"

"What do you want now?" came the answer, delivered exactly in the impatient tone that might be adopted by any one who was interrupted by some silly question while reading or otherwise engaged.

Though I cannot recall that I ever again heard Polly use the same expression, I have been told by my housekeeper that that or the variation, "What have you got now?" is the common inquiry addressed either to a tradesman who calls at the back door or to a maid who enters the kitchen.

I am told that the charwoman, an almost daily visitor, is now greeted with a cheery, "Good morning, Flossie"; but lest the lady should presume too much on the compliment, "Silly old fool!" is too often added by way of corollary.

Again, a lady who had been staying some days in the house, when on the point of departure she was anxious to say good-bye to my housekeeper, and had searched for that functionary in vain, at last timidly opened the kitchen door and said, "Can any one tell me where Miss W—— is?"

The parrot promptly replied, "Upstairs in the bathroom," an answer much to the point, if hopelessly untrue, as the person in question chanced to be discussing some matter with

the gardener at the far end of the kitchen garden. Doubtless the bird had heard the same question repeatedly before, and probably the answer which he supplied had held good on more than one occasion.

On the other hand, no lover of parrots can doubt that, even though these birds may be incapable of syllogistic reason, they share with many others of what we are pleased to call "irrational" creatures the power of connecting ideas. If I show my spaniel my gun or cartridge-bag she leaps about in the joy of expectation of a day's shooting; if she hears me open a tin of any kind she is on the alert at once, in the hope that the tin may contain biscuits. Similarly the visiting parrot, which I have mentioned, so soon as it had taken its morning bath, would cry out in an agonised voice, "Mother, mother, come to me quick! I'm a wet-through Polly." I should be sorry to say how many people passing by the wall of my seaside cottage have stopped to look where the soft "Good-bye," which has been murmured to them as they turn the corner, has come from. It has only been Polly's idea, copied from his master, of speeding the passing stranger.

Put that bird on a tree within sight and sound of a cricket match and I would guarantee that within ten minutes there would be an urgent appeal to the umpire. If I have never heard Polly's sharp

and incisive "How's that?" actually provoke a reply, twice over I have seen a stranger umpire turn round and cast a reproving glance at the gallery, one of whom had, as he supposed, unwarrantably interfered with the game.

Or again, let a company of men or boys march in step within earshot of Polly, and again I would guarantee that he would issue more or less appropriate orders at the top of his voice.

"Quick march—right—left—form fours!" &c.

Reminiscences these of his youth, when he constantly saw boys being drilled or playing cricket; but a parrot never really forgets—play the right card, and you may warrant him to follow suit. I imagine that that must have been a measured tread wherewith I found my way to the bathroom in my last house, and Polly, far away in the kitchen, was always on the look-out for it. Our brief conversation ran as follows:—

"Hulloa, father!"

"Hulloa, Polly!"

"Form fours!"

Only within the past week, a parson who was staying with me, and, anxious to test the parrot, marched round the dining-room table, received the same command.

Like Sam Weller, Polly may be described as self-educated, having picked up a fairly extensive vocabulary of his own accord without requiring any assistance from a schoolmaster.

[The one and only sentence which he was actually taught he owed to a chauffeur who had a good deal of spare time on his hands, and who, on finding that no inducement on his part would tempt Polly to say his lesson, resigned his post as teacher in despair. But he had not, as he supposed, laboured in vain. For Polly had treasured the sentence, but preferred to reserve it for suitable occasions. The first of these came when there was a tea-party in the kitchen. Accustomed to demand the right of sampling pretty well every form of food that passed through the kitchen, Polly furthermore expected to receive a daily invitation to the kitchen tea, at which meal he sat on a corner of the table, ate his bit of toast or bun off a tea-plate like any other gentleman, and drank his tea out of a tea-spoon that was proffered to him in response to his "Wet Polly's whistle."

But in the excitement of a rather large tea-party his claims were forgotten, and while the outside visitors were feasted, Polly was ignored. Vain were the walkings to and fro on his perch; even the petitions that his whistle might be wetted passed unheeded in the general buzz of conversation; the good things were vanishing fast—it was a clear case of now or never.

"Well, you *are* a rotten lot!" he shouted, and so won his cause. For the announcement was received with a general shout of laughter: he was

formally invited to the tea-table, and all was forgotten and forgiven.

I have never heard him use the phrase myself, but some two months ago a man who was staying with me came into the smoking-room simply bursting with laughter.

"It's that rum old parrot of yours," he explained; "he was in his cage in the yard, eating for all he was worth. I stopped and said, 'Good morning, Polly,' and I suppose he didn't like being interrupted. For he just turned his head, looked me up and down, and then told me that I was a rotten lot."

In addition to Polly's conversational powers, the bird evidently believes himself to be an accomplished songster, and he is in any case so far able to command an audience that on such occasions as I encourage him to exercise his talent in my present garden, about twelve feet square, a crowd of sea-trippers will flock from the beach to listen to him. So much so, indeed, that I am chary of letting him perform in public, and only on rare occasions produce him at the earnest request of a tribe of children, who seem to mistake me for a showman. They—or more probably their parents—may be said to pay in kind for the entertainment, as I have now by me four presentation copies of different photographs taken of myself and the parrot, which declines to pose without me. If I may

not claim that Polly's is a "golden tongue," or that his "music has charms to soothe the savage breast," at times his singing is extraordinarily funny. In the first year of his residence with me, he used occasionally to strike up of his own accord parts of "Come into the garden, Maud," and of "God save the Queen." Nowadays Maud has been entirely discarded, and he has so far forgotten his allegiance to the reigning monarch as, after starting quite correctly with "God save——" to finish the line with my daughter's name, and then come to a full stop. With the above-named trivial exception, Polly now declines to sing a solo, but, given an accompaniment, whether of human voice or piano, he is at all times willing to oblige. A few years ago, in the district where I was living, afternoon bridge-parties were much in vogue during the winter months. A constant attendant at these meetings was a retired naval officer, a staunch admirer of Polly, and, if the party was at my house, he always insisted on the presence of the bird during the tea interval, which was at once enlivened and prolonged by the duets chanted by Polly and the sailor. These were really comic to a degree, and would assuredly have brought down the house at any music-hall.

But—"There is always a pathetic side even to the most comic performance. I am quite certain that both those poor creatures thought they could

sing, and I never heard such discordant noises in my life!"

This dictum was offered by a somewhat melancholic man, who was over-fond of moralising, on the evening after a bridge-party. Wrong again, my dear sir! The sailor, frankly confessing that he did not know a note of music, was simply showing off the parrot, and Polly had no intention of being out-voiced and out-sung by any man living.

This fatal combination of Polly's powers *qua* songster and *qua* drill-sergeant so nearly brought not Polly himself but his temporary nurse, my housekeeper, into signal disgrace at a local inn, that the latter lost her head altogether and practically bolted from the inn without paying her bill, though she had the wherewithal in her pocket. On our way home from a Welsh shooting-box my daughter and I had promised to stop for one night with an old friend at Shrewsbury, while the housekeeper, Polly, and a small Pomeranian dog were to be accommodated at the inn. The housekeeper, having given her pledge that both her charges could be warranted to be quiet at night and not to disturb the other lodgers, was allowed to keep them in her bedroom. So far so good—in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred neither dog nor parrot was likely to utter a sound after it had once settled down for the night. But—it was in February 1919, when troops returning from the war were still

being carried to various parts of England, and it so happened that a battalion, which should have reached Shrewsbury in the course of the evening, being delayed, I fancy, by a breakdown on the line, actually arrived at midnight. The result was that as the inn lay on their line of march to their quarters, Polly's slumbers were broken by the sound of men marching in step and singing. Rising at once to the occasion, the parrot never left off shouting every word of command in his vocabulary in his most military voice until the sound of the marching died away in the distance, when his patriotic instincts having been also aroused, he struck up his own version of "God save the King," and sang away lustily for a good half-hour. Small wonder, then, that the worthy woman was not a little flustered, and that I had to write a cheque and an apology to the landlord.

One more story about Polly, a story which I have left to the end, in the hope that any ultra-pious spinster, who may have essayed to wade through this narrative, may by this time have given it up in despair. I am afraid that Polly in his early days must have fallen into bad company, as for the first few weeks after I had bought him he now and again used to give utterance to words of ill omen; but it is only fair to my household and to the bird to add that his language—such of it at least as we can understand—is to-

day without reproach. Even so, if any one chances to stumble up against his cage after he has been covered up for the night, the truly awful guttural and providentially untranslatable sounds that he gives vent to may indeed be foreign oaths, and most certainly suggest "battle, murder, and sudden death" to the offender.

To proceed with my story. In the very early days of our acquaintance Polly, unused perhaps to his new quarters and brooding over the past, if fairly conversational when I was in the room, refused to say a word in my absence. This much to the grief of my dear old mother, who was staying with us at Eastbourne, and having fallen in love with him at first sight, was constantly trying to make him talk. I should add that when Polly is disinclined for conversation and any one speaks to him, he has a habit of appearing to be deeply engrossed in his food. It was thus that I found them one morning—my mother using all her blandishments, Polly digging his beak into his food-tray.

"Oh, do come and make dear Polly talk; she" (my mother always spoke of the bird as "she") "will do nothing but eat when I speak to her."

Polly just looked round. "Don't be a d—d fool!" he said, and then went on eating.

Fortunately the dear old ady was rather deaf.

"What did dear Polly say?" she eagerly inquired.

I thought it prudent to feign deafness too.

"I didn't quite catch it," I replied.

"Oh, do try and make her say it again. I am sure it was something funny."

I did not try very hard, and devoutly prayed that I might be unsuccessful—and by good luck I was so.

One word more. I do not claim that my parrot is clever beyond other parrots. But he has constantly amused and

always loved me. Much the same rule holds good of parrots, of dogs, and of all domestic animals. Once win their affection and their confidence and it will be your own fault if you do not keep them for all time. To the man the dumb animal—for in most cases nature has so willed—is a transient pleasure; to the animal its master is little short of divine—it will fear him, love him, and honour him with all its heart, with all its intelligence, and all its strength, and this till death do them part.

A CONSUL IN THE MAKING.

BY A. C. WRATISLAW, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E.

II.

THE British Consulate at Erzeroum was hardly maintained for the comfort and protection of the British subjects resident there, for I found only one, and he a naturalised Armenian. A little later my colony was trebled by the return of the Rev. W. Chambers and his wife, who ran the inevitable American Mission to the Armenians, but were themselves of Canadian origin. Other foreign communities were equally limited in numbers. An Italian chemist represented Italy as Consular Agent, and the quarantine doctor was also of Italian nationality, both of them, however, born in Turkey, and, with their families, as much native as European in their ways. Two or three Catholic priests composed the French colony. They had no consular representative, but enjoyed the protection of the Russian Consulate-General. The Russians were more numerous, that is to say, Russian subjects from the Caucasus—Circassians, Georgians, and Armenians—for I do not remember there being any genuine Russians outside the Consulate-General. The Consul-General was absent, and the Vice-Consul,† Preobragensky, quite a young man, in charge. We became excellent friends—

indeed, it would have been absurd to be otherwise, as neither of us had any one else to consort with, nor was there any local political question which might embitter the personal relations of Muscovite and Briton. We had a third colleague (the Italian did not count, for his official position was purely nominal) in the shape of a Persian Consul-General, a not very civilised individual, of whom we saw but little, as his time was fully taken up with extracting a living from the Persian community. I have no reason to believe that he received any salary at all; but the number of Persian traders, muleteers, and camel-drivers established in Erzeroum or passing through was so considerable that, in spite of the cruel handicap imposed by a recent decree of the Porte which forbade the practice of torture by Persian Consuls in the Ottoman dominions, he managed to make a very good thing out of his post. Even the Persian Ambassador at Constantinople lives, or at any rate used to live, by what may euphemistically be termed the “fees” paid by his countrymen, just as does the Governor of a Province in Persia itself.

After settling down in the house, my first care was to sample the shooting. This proved to be rather disappointing on account of the lateness of the season, for it was now the beginning of November, and the birds were migrating southwards. One of the branches of the Euphrates, the Kara Sou, has its source in the mountains north-west of Erzeroum, and as it runs through the plain forms a marsh perhaps a couple of miles broad, which in August, September, and October is the haunt of snipe and innumerable varieties of duck, and very good sport can be obtained. But the first time I went most of the snipe were already gone, the duck were on the move, and the bag consisted mainly of the lesser bustard, of which large flocks still remained. The great bustard was there too, but neither then or on any subsequent occasion have I been able to approach near enough to these wary birds to justify a shot. I went again three or four days afterwards, and found the marsh still emptier. Then the snow fell, both stream and marsh were frozen solid, and one could ride across the plain with ease.

The rigour of the winter was something appalling.

The town of Erzeroum stands 6200 feet above the level of the sea, at the north-western end of a plain about ten miles long by six wide, and all around are hills one or two thousand feet higher. When a good

strong wind is blowing from the north or east no one who can afford to stay indoors would think of going out, but on still days the cold dry atmosphere is not unpleasant. I cannot say what the temperature actually was, for the minimum marked on my thermometer was only zero Fahrenheit, and the quicksilver remained at zero in the shade for days together, not being able to go any lower. For five solid months the plain was one sheet of snow whose dazzling whiteness was only relieved by dirty smudges betokening villages. Not a tree appeared, for all had been cut down for fuel during the occupation by the Russians nine years before. Inside the town the snow became a positive nuisance, for no means was provided of getting rid of it. After every fall it had to be shovelled off the flat roofs of the houses into the streets below, and where these were narrow, as was generally the case, the mound in the middle rose so high that a pedestrian passing along the narrow track which gave access to the doorways could not even see the head of any one walking on the other side. The town lay on a slope, and when this accumulation dissolved at the end of the winter an involuntary spring cleaning occurred as the torrents of melted snow swept the year's conglomeration of filth with them into the plain. A sudden and intensive thaw had been known to produce a flood in which men were

actually carried away and drowned; but such accidents are attributed to the will of Allah, and are not sufficient to stimulate a Turkish municipality into any impious display of energy.

The better-class houses were provided with double doors and windows to keep the cold out, while in the poorer dwellings an attempt was made to produce the same effect by pasting layers of paper over the windows and any crevices there might be. In their darkened hovels, with the vitiated atmosphere and the fumes of tezek, the existence of the proletariat, whether Moslem or Christian, must have been joyless in the extreme. The vast majority could neither read nor write, and Heaven only knows how they passed their time apart from drinking coffee and gossiping. Even in the summer-time there was never any merry-making or public amusement so far as I could see, and from autumn to spring the town seemed dead. Taking it altogether there can be few gloomier places to reside in than Erzeroum.

The population was somewhere in the region of forty thousand, Mussulmans largely predominating. Turks and Armenians mixed very little, but no animosity was apparent between the two elements, the former usually maintaining towards the latter the attitude of contemptuous toleration which is habitual to them in normal times, and the Ar-

menians only too glad to be allowed to live their wretched lives in peace. And yet before ten years had passed, when the hint came from Constantinople, the Turks of Erzeroum rose up and cheerfully slaughtered their Christian fellow-townsmen—not, indeed, on so wholesale a scale as occurred in some other towns, but still to a sufficiently terrible extent. The fanaticism may be latent, but it is always there, and ready to explode when the match is applied. To see the shapeless bundles of clothes which were Turkish women toddling along the streets, no one would imagine them capable of energetic action of any kind, much less of atrocity; nevertheless after the last desperate effort of the Russians in 1878 to take the Devé Boyoun Pass, these same bundles sallied out of the town in hundreds to mutilate and murder the unfortunate Russian wounded.

The Vali of Erzeroum at this time was Mustapha Pasha, who in his younger days had been nicknamed “Phosphor” from the vivacity of his disposition. But he was now very old, and though the nickname remained the briskness was only a matter of tradition. He was not a bad governor, and indeed the Turkish official of the old school, who in long years of service has acquired at least some practical if antiquated idea of administration, has always seemed to me more satisfactory to deal with than the bumptious type of man who is succeeding

him, and who, while speaking French and professing to be modern, has lost most of the primitive qualities of the race without acquiring in their place more than a veneer of civilisation. Phosphor's *bête noire* was education, which he rightly considered incompatible with the peaceful maintenance of a régime such as prevailed in Turkey; but he was quite willing to leave the Armenians unmolested, provided they were content to remain in the station in which they were born. Had the occasion occurred in his time, he would certainly have done his best to harry them out of the land as soon as they showed any disposition to raise their heads.

He was a great stickler for politeness, even to Christians, and I heard of his rebuking the lack of it in the following manner. A deputation of Turks waited on him to complain that their womenfolk were incommoded by the presence of too many Armenian women at the bath on the day that it was reserved for females. They began, "Hasha boundan, Giaour karilari," meaning "Saving your presence" (or "Excuse our mentioning it"), "the infidel women——" when the Vali broke in, telling them to be off and wash their lips. The deputation withdrew, and consulted as to what they could have said wrong, but finding no answer to the question returned to the presence. "Hasha boundan, Giaour karilari," the spokesman began

again; but they were driven away a second time with the reiterated request to retire and wash their lips. The bewildered delegates thereupon begged the Vali's secretary to ascertain where their fault lay, and he returned with the message that "Hasha boundan" was uncalled for as a preface to the mention of any subjects of the Sultan whatever their religion might be, while it was grossly impolite to talk of "infidel women," the correct term being "Christian ladies."

I probably had not occasion to see the Vali more than once a month, and then for purely official purposes, but with Moussa Pasha, the General commanding the troops, and the next most important man in the place, my relations were of a much more intimate and friendly character. He was a dear old man, gentle in manner and kind of heart, but a redoubtable fighter withal. In his youth (he was a Circassian) he had served with distinction in the Russian Army, and taken part in hostilities against Turkey in the Crimean war. Afterwards he resigned his Russian commission, entered the Turkish army, and fought against Russia in the war of 1877-78. The Armenians adored him, and looked on him as a protector; he was well liked by the Turks, and in fact universally popular. It was always a pleasure to call on Moussa Pasha and listen to his stories of old forgotten far-off things and battles long ago.

Another Turk of whom I saw something socially was Halid Pasha, who commanded the artillery. He had a passion for the card game known locally as "otouz bir"—i.e., thirty-one—which was simply the venerable Vingt-et-un with an imaginary ten attached to it, and from time to time he would send word to me that he proposed to come round to my house in the evening to play, and would bring in his train three or four Armenians whom he named, sycophants who had attached themselves to his person. These parties were not much fun. The Pasha played fairly enough, as I hope I did myself, but the sycophants cheated shamelessly. There was no pretence about it, and it was up to the dealer to detect and checkmate any malpractices he could. There was one Catholic Armenian who annoyed me extremely by invariably starting the evening with the demand for the loan of a pound, on the pretext that he had forgotten his purse. He always repaid my pound at the end of the sitting, and went off jingling three or four others which he had won from the Pasha and myself, so I found the transaction both humiliating and expensive.

The winter was not far advanced when an Inspector of the Public Debt, whose acquaintance I had made in Salonica, arrived in Erzeroum. He was a great acquisition, as now Preobragensky and I were able to play dummy bridge of

an evening. Our usual practice was to devote the time until midnight to bridge, and then to conclude with a Russian game called "Préférence" as a concession to Preobragensky. Without this resource I do not think I could have stood the deadly monotony of the winter. Books were unprocurable unless one ordered them from England, a matter of two months; and newspapers were soon read, even when the weekly post from Trebizond got through, and it was often held up for a week or a fortnight by snow on the road. The long nights would have been purgatory but for cards.

The daytime was easier to get through. Without offending Yussuf Effendi's ideas of what was proper, there was still a modicum of work, which helped to pass the time. Preobragensky did not care for riding, but he could be induced to take an occasional walk. At other times Dr Aslanian, the naturalised British subject already mentioned, would accompany me. He was an M.R.C.S. of London, and it was due to his skill in surgery that Colonel Everett recovered from his wounds. While in England he had become a Quaker, and was one of the most timid men I have ever met, obsessed with fears of massacre and outrage; and when later on these fears seemed likely to be realised he lost no time in migrating to Persia, where I found him in 1903. Mr and Mrs Chambers were

charming people, and I was always assured of a welcome in their house. Sometimes Mrs Chambers would accompany me for a ride, but she and her husband were too busy with the work of their mission to be often available as companions, so my rides were usually solitary. There was not much choice of direction, as only the two highroads were practicable for riding in winter—that running eastwards towards Kars through the Devé Boyoun Pass, and the Trebizond road. The latter was the most attractive, for, about eight or nine miles away, near the village of Ilidja, a number of hot springs issued from the ground and formed a little marsh which was never entirely frozen over. This was frequented by some eccentric snipe and duck, which had elected to pass the winter there instead of migrating with their more conservative fellows, and it was generally possible to shoot one or two to vary Showa's menu and to afford an object for a ride.

In February my evil genius prompted me to go bear-shooting. I think that the idea must have been suggested originally by Yussuf Effendi, who desired an excursion to relieve the monotony of his clerical duties. He certainly assured me that in the far end of the district of Tortoum, due north of Erzeroum and about half-way between that town and the Black Sea, bears were to be found in profusion and shot under exceptionally easy con-

ditions. Probably he knew nothing whatever about the matter, but circumstances did not allow me either to confirm or confute his statements. We started early one morning, Yussuf, Tatos, and I, riding straight across the plain and then ascending a track up the mountains on the other side. Beasts of burden constantly going up and down and treading in the same place had worn the path into a peculiar formation resembling a ladder, the untrodden parts representing the rungs, and it was impossible to go at any pace beyond a walk, and even so our unaccustomed horses stumbled continually. It was glorious weather, but the glare of the sun on the snow proved very trying after a time and affected my eyes most unpleasantly. There was also a keen north wind blowing, and this, combined with the sun, raised blisters on my nose and ears which were exceedingly irritating. Altogether the ride was by no means enjoyable, and after eight hours' plodding we were glad enough to put up for the night at a village half-way to our final destination.

Hospitality to travellers is a duty invariably recognised by the Turks, and in most villages something in the shape of a guest-house is provided for their entertainment, the mosque being used in the last resort. In this particular village a raised platform at the end of the cattle stable belonging to the headman served as hotel, and was

cordially put at my disposal by the owner, who also entertained us sumptuously at dinner. The elders of the village were invited to meet us and partake of the really excellent food provided, of which the *pièces de résistance* were a stew of partridges, and pilaf. A large raw onion, to be nibbled as a relish between the courses, was served out to each diner, who was also provided with a quire of the thin native bread, and a piece of this made quite an efficient scoop or spoon. For the rest, the time-honoured principle that fingers were made before forks prevailed. Conversation on such occasions is not encouraged, and the guests devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the consumption of food, staring stolidly at me during the intervals. Even when dinner was over and the customary *feu de joie* of eructations had been fired in compliment to the host and as testimony to the copiousness of his dinner, there was little talking beyond a few lies told by Yussuf Effendi with metropolitan assurance, and swallowed as gospel by his simple audience. I began to feel sleepy, and said I was tired and would like to go to bed, so Tatos was sent for and put up my camp-bed. No one budged, not even when Tatos pulled off my boots and I began slowly to undress. In the end I had to disrobe completely under the curious eyes of the village elders, who themselves never took off more than their outer garments at

night, and were entranced to watch the *coucher* of a distinguished foreigner. It was only when I was actually in bed that they trooped out, leaving me to get what sleep was allowed by the attentions of the fleas and the unrestfulness of the sixteen cows and oxen which shared the stable with us.

We passed a poor night, even Yussuf, who had much less than his fair share of the fleas, and were easily persuaded to stay and rest another day before continuing our journey. Indeed, our host discouraged any further progress at all, first on the ground that there were no bears, and secondly because the bears were terribly fierce and more likely to destroy us than we them. The truth probably was that in some way or other he feared that we might get into trouble and he be held responsible. Yussuf also began to hedge, and hinted at bad men lurking in Tortoum to rob and kill the stranger. Not that he cared for his own safety, of course, but he felt considerable anxiety on my account. The final decision was postponed till the evening, and meanwhile our host's son with two other young Turks conducted me on to the hills in pursuit of red-legged partridges. There were lots of these birds about, but after the manner of their kind they refused to rise unless absolutely cornered, and to make anything of a bag one was reduced to the painful necessity of

shooting them running. The weather conditions of the previous day still prevailed, and my eyes became worse and worse until I could hardly see out of them, and was already thinking of returning when the Turks said, "Look, Effendi, look. Partridges, shoot." Dimly discerning two objects which appeared to be slightly moving on the top of a rock, and suspecting no treachery, I raised my gun and fired. The report was followed by piercing shrieks as two Armenians leaped from the other side of the rock behind which they had been sitting to shelter from the wind. It was the top of their fezes which I had seen, and which the rascally Turks had told me were partridges. The Turk is by nature a staid individual, not often indulging in any outward manifestation of his emotions, but on this occasion my followers let themselves go, literally rolling on the ground in enjoyment of the exquisite jest.

Fortunately the damage done to the Armenians was slight—a few pellets of No. 6 shot in their scalps,—and on my presenting them with a mejidieh (three and fourpence) each as blood-money, they joined hands and danced joyfully before me, even declaring their readiness to serve as target again at the same price. But I had a great fright, and was glad to hasten back to the village before something worse happened.

Next morning I was practically blind, and there was nothing for it but to return to

Erzeroum. It was a melancholy and painful ride back, but my horse played up nobly, and we reached the town without mishap. A week's seclusion under the care of Dr Aslanian made my eyes as well as ever.

In justice to Erzeroum, of whose capabilities as a pleasure resort I have given but a gloomy picture, it is only fair to say that during my sojourn there two entertainments were given at which I was privileged to attend. The first was at the house of one of the wealthier Armenians, who asked me to spend the evening, and added that there would be dancing. I duly presented myself after dinner, and was rather surprised to notice the complete absence of ladies in the reception-room. The men, all of them Christians, were between twenty and thirty in number, but no provision seemed to be made for partners. Coffee, brandy, and cigarettes were handed round and consumed in silence by the company seated on divans along the walls, after which the master of the house advanced into the centre of the room and gravely executed an elaborate *pas seul* which did credit to his agility, for he was a middle-aged man. One of the guests then obliged, by request, an equally spirited performance; but I can give no account of what followed, for I took my leave on the pretext of sudden indisposition, being really in a state of extreme nervousness lest I should

be called on to tread a measure myself.

The other occasion was when the Persian Consul-General invited Preobragensky and myself to witness a camel-fight. He received us in the house of one of his colony, from the first-floor windows of which we gazed at the performance in the square below, drinking tea and consuming sweetmeats in the intervals. There were a dozen male camels, each under the charge of his owner or driver—fine beasts in their shaggy winter coats and gaudy trappings—and three or four females to furnish the motive for a quarrel. The procedure was for two males and a female to be led into the middle of the arena together, when the gladiators would grunt defiance at each other, blowing from their mouths great yellow bubbles, which burst with an evil smell, and straddling their ungainly legs till they could hardly maintain their balance. Meanwhile the lady looked on superciliously with the occasional interjection of a contemptuous remark, which finally had the desired effect of goading her swains into action. They first endeavoured to bite, but as a piece of cord was bound tightly round their jaws to prevent any serious damage being done to such valuable beasts, the combat soon degenerated into a wrestling match. The sight of these antediluvian creatures struggling in the snow and almost tying their long necks into knots in the attempt to

heave the antagonist off his feet was extraordinarily comic; nor was the ludicrous effect lessened by the alacrity with which one or the other would suddenly recognise that he was outmatched and break the clinch to lumber off, pursued by the jeers of his lost love.

The necessary touch of tragedy was added in the fourth encounter, when one camel had the luck to slip his muzzle sufficiently to seize his adversary by the ear and bite it off, to the intense grief of the owner, who blubbered piteously as he led his beast away. After this accident not all the curses and threats of the Consul-General could induce the remaining proprietors to bring their animals up to the scratch, and the meeting broke up in confusion. Our sincere thanks to our colleague for a very pleasant afternoon were received by him with greater complacency than the facts warranted, for he had commandeered camels, house, and refreshments, and had not been put to a single penny of expense.

It seemed as though the winter would never come to an end. Early in March there was another very heavy fall of snow, which caught and overwhelmed a large caravan while passing over the Kop Dagħ; and it was not until April was well advanced that anything in the shape of a thaw occurred. When the snow started melting in earnest the streets became for the time

almost impassable, but this year the thaw was gradual, and there was no flood. By the end of April the plain was free from snow, the marsh along the course of the Kara Sou became one immense sheet of water, the playground of innumerable wild-fowl back from the South, and spring had arrived.

From May until the beginning of October the climate of Erzeroum is pleasant enough, being free from excessive heat and not unhealthy. A few years later the town suffered severely from epidemics of cholera and smallpox, but the climate can hardly be held responsible for such visitations any more than for the slaughter of Armenians. There was a certain amount of malaria, though not of a virulent type, and naturally the filthy conditions prevailing in the town encouraged typhoid and other diseases which thrive on defective sanitation; but I personally had nothing to complain of on the score of health.

Early in the summer the Russian Consul-General, General Dennet, returned from leave, and Preobragensky left us to my great regret. The Consul-General's *ménage* was a peculiar one, modelled rather on Oriental than on Western practice, and gave occasion to much jocular and unseemly remark amongst the Turks. The absolute disregard of appearances and contempt for public opinion shown by many Russian officials in the East

is one of their most striking characteristics, but none of them in my experience kept so outrageous an establishment as General Dennet. However, apart from his moral peculiarities, he was pleasant enough to deal with.

The motive of the Russian Government in selecting an officer of the General Staff as their representative in a strategic centre so near to the frontier as Erzeroum was obvious enough. The appointment of a British officer as Consul in the same place was not solely in the nature of a retort courteous, but was also part of the general scheme initiated in 1878 for the supervision of the "reforms" promised by the Porte in the Cyprus Convention in return for a British guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman Dominions in Asia Minor. Her Majesty's Government held that military men would be able to exercise more efficient control over the situation than civilians, and in pursuance of this idea officers of the British Army were scattered in various Consular capacities throughout Anatolia. Ten years' experience had, however, proved that the measure of reform introduced under the eye of the military amounted to exactly what it would have been without them—that is to say, nothing at all. The British Government withdrew their guarantee, but without feeling called on to return the island of Cyprus, which had been handed

over to Great Britain in order to render the guarantee more effective; and the military Consulates and Vice-Consulates gradually disappeared. By 1888 Erzeroum alone of them remained, and even here Colonel Chermiside, who was now appointed to succeed Colonel Everett, proved to be the last of his race.

Some time elapsed between the date of his appointment and his arrival in Erzeroum—a delay which gave me no reason to grumble, as existence in summer was by no means disagreeable, and for the first and last time in my official experience the cheapness of living enabled me to put by money.

Premonitory symptoms of the Armenian Question were now appearing. The first I heard of it was when calling on the Vali to talk to him about a complaint of the missionaries that letters addressed to them from other towns in the province were opened at local post-offices. Phosphor admitted that there might be something in the complaint. "Anarchists" in Russia, he said, were known to be inciting the Armenian subjects of the Sultan to rebellion against their lawful sovereign, and the Turkish authorities had in consequence to keep a watch on correspondence. Education, of course, was at the bottom of it all. All the same, he would give orders that letters addressed to British subjects were to be respected in future.

It must be confessed that

the old gentleman's apprehensions seemed to me far-fetched. The impression I had gathered of the Armenians was that they offered about as promising soil for the sowing of sedition as a flock of sheep. But events proved that he was right, and that Armenian secret societies working from a secure base in the Caucasus were already preparing untold misery for their helpless compatriots in Turkey.

A month or so afterwards Chambers came to me in a great state of perturbation, to say that an Armenian teacher in the mission school had been consigned to prison, and to beg me to get him out. It appeared that the Turks had obtained possession of a composition in which one of the boys embodied a passionate appeal to the Armenians—a hundred thousand was the number he considered necessary—to rise and throw off the Turkish yoke. To make matters worse, the master to whom this literary effort was submitted, instead of tearing it up or reporting its author to the head of the mission, as was his obvious duty, had simply handed it back with corrections, and could not deny his handwriting. His arrest on a charge of sedition was the natural sequel. I fear that Chambers thought my refusal to intervene a sign of hard-heartedness, but there was no possible ground for interference, and to make an appeal which was foredoomed to rejection would have only made

matters worse. The teacher was still in custody when I left Erzeroum, and I never heard what finally became of him. The rash essayist, who was arrested at the same time, died before long in prison of typhoid fever.

Erzeroum was hardly the place where one would expect to meet tourists, and yet they did occasionally pass through. A Spaniard and his wife, travelling under the name of the Count and Countess de Chelva, arrived in March on their way to Kars, just managing to get through the Kop Pass on the day of the big storm I have mentioned. By offering a reward of five pounds for each man brought in, they persuaded the people of the khan to go out and save the lives of the camel-drivers of the caravan, who would otherwise have been left to perish in the snow with their beasts. Without some considerable inducement it simply does not occur to the Oriental to go out of his way to preserve human life, and the unfortunate camel-men, being Persians and heretics, would have been left to their fate for all the orthodox Turks cared. The Vali received orders from Constantinople to show these Spaniards every attention in his power, and it was said—I know not with how much truth—that the Count de Chelva was a Carlist Prince. They stayed a few days with us, recovering from the effects of their journey—the poor lady's face was raw from the action

of the wind and frost,—and then went on to Kars.

One morning in June a letter was brought to me from Sir W. White introducing the Military Attaché to the Austrian Embassy at Constantinople, who proposed to stay a few days in Erzeroum, and requesting me to do everything to make his stay a pleasant one. This of course implied putting him up, so I gave orders for the necessary preparations, and waited with not unpleasurable anticipation for the arrival of the visitor, who, so the messenger informed me, was only an hour or so behind him. When the carriage drove up to my door, it was with decidedly mixed feelings that I noted the presence of an attractive young lady in it as well as a man. This proved to be the Austrian's newly-wedded wife, who accompanied him, so he informed me, because they did not care to be separated so soon after marriage. I was in for it, and had to do the best my limited resources allowed for the comfort and entertainment of the pair. Fortunately no guests could have been easier to please and less exacting. They were out to enjoy themselves, and apparently succeeded in doing so, even in so unpromising a spot for a honeymoon as Erzeroum. At times their frank indulgence in connubialities was a little embarrassing to a young and modest host, but on the whole the visit of this light-hearted pair afforded me great pleasure.

But if I was gratified, it was far otherwise with the Russian Consul-General, who fell victim to a perfect agony of curiosity and suspicion regarding the motives which could have induced an Austrian officer to trespass on a Russian preserve so far removed from any Austrian sphere of interest. The Military Attaché made no attempt to conceal the object of his visit, which, apart from the natural wish to enjoy a jaunt at the expense of his Government, was to have a look at the new system of forts recently completed by the Turks in the Devé Boyoun Pass. But this explanation failed to satisfy General Dennet, convinced as he was that behind it lurked some dark design against the interests of Holy Russia, and in consequence my guest and I were carefully shadowed whenever we ventured out of the house. We devoted one day to riding round the forts and checking their positions on a map which the Austrian had brought with him from Constantinople, and at every turn we ran up against some emissary of the Russian Consulate-General, whose efforts to appear unconcerned under our amused scrutiny were rather comic.

These forts had a somewhat curious history. The Russians could raise no open objection to their being erected in what was after all Turkish territory, but as soon as the Porte manifested any intention of placing orders for their armament in

Germany, the Russian Embassy at once presented the bill for the war indemnity of thirty million pounds, urging that if the Turks were rich enough to buy artillery they could pay something on account of their debt. Thus the new forts were at this period still unarmed, and remained so for some time afterwards. In the Great War the Russian Army never broke through them, but got into Erzeroum by a back way.

By the time my guests left rumours were already rife concerning the imminent arrival of Colonel Chermside. As a matter of fact, he did not appear for nearly a month, but the uncertainty prevented any prolonged excursions. I did pay a hurried visit to the Tortoum river, but found it in flood, owing to the late melting of the snow, and all that could be done was to pick up a few trout with the worm in eddies and backwaters. When the river is in a suitable condition for the fly the fishing is by all accounts first class, the trout being quite unsophisticated and running large. I was assured that an Armenian bishop in Tortoum, a great sportsman, was in the habit of visiting the river by night with a torch, which he would hold over the water to attract the big trout and then smite them over the head with a sword, and so capture them. But I had no opportunity of seeing the prelate at work.

Colonel Chermside finally

turned up, and I was free to go a week after. This time I sent my baggage in advance and rode, taking no more with me than Tatos and I could carry on our horses. Whether it was the lovely weather, or the being independent of the vagaries of a coachman, or the delight of escaping from Erzeroum, or the combination of all three, the journey back proved much more enjoyable, as it was certainly more expeditious than my first experience of the same road. There being no inducement to linger in the khans on the way, we made a practice of starting at three in the morning or thereabouts, resting during the midday heat, and then riding until sunset, and reached Trebizond on the night of the fourth day, a clear gain of two days over the carriage.

After a short interlude in the British Consulate-General at Constantinople I was appointed Vice-Consul at Smyrna, and arrived there in November 1888. A more complete change from Erzeroum, with its British colony of three persons, its remote situation, and its dreary winter, than Smyrna, the premier trading centre in Turkey, a flourishing port, and the most populous town in Turkey after Constantinople, could hardly be imagined. The province of Aidin, of which it is the capital, is the most productive district in the Ottoman Empire, raising important quantities of figs, raisins, grain,

valonea, &c., and, what is rare in Asia Minor, possessing the means of transporting its products to the sea in the shape of two railways—the Smyrna-Aidin line to the south, and the Smyrna-Cassaba to the north of the town. Both these lines were then British-owned (the second passed out of our hands a few years later), the lion's share of the trade fell to Great Britain, and the British community, if not the most numerous, was certainly the most prosperous and influential amongst the foreigners of the place. Smyrna has for centuries possessed a peculiar attraction for foreigners and Christians, so much so as to earn from the Turks the name of Giaour Izmir—Infidel Smyrna. As everywhere else in Turkey, the exact population of the town was a matter of conjecture, but the usual estimate of 250,000 cannot have been far out. Whether Turks outnumbered Greeks or Greeks Turks was a moot point, but neither had an absolute majority in the town when the considerable foreign, Armenian, and Jewish elements were also taken into consideration.

Smyrna, with its extensive quays and modern port, offered a fair enough aspect to any one arriving by sea, but the streets behind were narrow and tortuous, and the town itself dirty in winter and horribly stuffy during the summer, when the temperature often exceeds 100° in the shade. As a place of residence the town was far

from pleasing, and most of those who conveniently could took houses outside in the suburbs, along the shore of the gulf, or in the villages of Boujah and Bournabat, four or five miles from the town, and connected with it by rail. Lord Byron lived at Boujah when he visited Turkey a hundred years ago, and the avenue is still pointed out where he was accustomed to amuse himself with pistol practice. I tried the village for a few months, but finding it dull migrated to Bournabat, where most of the English people lived, and where existence was much more lively. Here there were tennis courts, a football club, and an agreeable English society in whose midst I spent my leisure time most pleasantly, going to town every morning by train and returning in the afternoon when the day's work was done.

The Consulate buildings were in a sad condition. There was a large private residence for the Consul-General, offices, a court, a chapel, and a post-office, and it would be difficult to say which department gave the impression of greatest decrepitude. The whole had been taken over by the Foreign Office from the Levant Company when that institution surrendered its charter in 1825, and, judging from appearances, had not since undergone repair. However, it was now at last condemned, and the process of gradual demolition and reconstruction continued during the

whole of my three years in Smyrna, enveloping the establishment in an atmosphere of dust and noise which was the reverse of pleasant.

Holmwood, the Consul-General, had only a few months before been transplanted from Zanzibar to Turkey. The surroundings were entirely new to him, and he was consequently quite content to leave the Vice-Consul to run the office after his own fashion. Long residence in a tropical climate had also afflicted him with a liver complaint necessitating an annual cure at Carlsbad, so for the greater part of each summer I was left entirely to my own devices. During his residence in Africa the Consul-General had accumulated a store of yarns relating to his adventures in that mysterious continent which won him the sobriquet of Truthful Freddy, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle; but he met his match in his Austrian colleague, who had also been in Africa, and whose stock story of how he was in the habit of tying up his little son as a bait to entice by infant wailings the crocodiles of the Nile to emerge from the river and fall victims to the unerring gun of the sire, was generally adjudged superior to anything that Holmwood's experience or imagination could evolve.

In addition to the Consul-General and Vice-Consul, a Chaplain, three Clerks, a Dragoman, and three Cavasses made up the staff of the Consulate, which

had also attached to it a British Seamen's Hospital in charge of an English surgeon, and a post-office, quite an extensive establishment as Consulates go. There was, however, a good deal of work to do. The British colony was a large one, and in those days some four hundred British steamers visited the port every year, and usually remained quite sufficient time discharging and loading cargo to afford ample opportunity for their crews to get into trouble ashore.

The British seaman was then wretchedly paid. An A.B. earned no more than £3, 10s. per month, and naturally the class of man attracted by so meagre a wage was far from high. But even had they been a collection of plaster saints, the Merchant Shipping Act lays down such elaborate regulations to ensure the welfare of the sailor abroad that no Consul in a busy port need complain of lack of occupation. The Act seems inspired throughout by the idea that the master, and the owner he represents, are out to cheat and bully the seaman, and in pursuance of this conviction insists that no transaction between the parties shall take place without the cognisance and sanction of a Consular officer. When a seaman is signed on a ship's articles, or discharged with or without his consent, it must be in the presence of a Consul, who sees that the master pays him his just due, mothers him until he gets another ship,

provides him when sick with hospital treatment, and if necessary sends him home, besides a score of other attentions, which are usually accepted with grumbling distrust by the seaman.

The disposal of sick sailors is often a matter of some difficulty to a Consul in less civilised ports, but at Smyrna things were made easy by the existence of the Seamen's Hospital. Mariners left behind in sound health were boarded out in a Greek inn where the preponderance of vegetables in the menu over meat sometimes gave rise to complaint. However, it was the best we could do for them in the absence of a special establishment for their entertainment. Smyrna did boast of an institution bearing the proud title of "The Sailor's Rest," and maintained by some evangelical body, where Parkinson, a converted ship's carpenter, dispensed tea, coffee, cocoa, and buns to all comers; but his customers were drawn chiefly from the ranks of a small band of Greek Protestants, and the British seaman of the period showed no marked partiality for non-alcoholic beverages.

The British community consisted of nearly two thousand souls, two-thirds of them Maltese and the rest English. The members of the Maltese section were for the most part poor, and a good many of them, I regret to say, disreputable. They constantly quarrelled amongst themselves,

got into trouble with the Turkish police, and in one way or another gave the Consulate an infinity of trouble.

The English fell under two categories. There were those born in the British Isles who had come to Smyrna for various reasons connected with the railways, the gas-works (also a British concern), or for their private business, and who in no way differed from the British colony to be met with in most big towns abroad. These were comparatively few, and quite swamped by the old established element. The forebears of many of these last had belonged to the defunct Levant Company, and had been settled in Turkey for many generations. In some cases long residence in the East had tended to approximate their way of living to local standards. At Smyrna, as in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Levant, the new arrival notices that the foreigner who has been born and bred in the country, whether he be of British, French, or other nationality, speaks his language with a peculiar accent, and often makes use of phrases which are not current in the land from which he originates. This is perhaps more marked amongst the English than other nationalities, and in Smyrna than in other Turkish towns. Such little peculiarities of speech, hardly if at all perceptible in families whose means allowed them to send their children to school in England, became much more marked as the social scale

was descended, until one found a certain number of British subjects for whom Greek had taken the place of English as their ordinary means of expression.

A trifling variation from the language spoken in the British Isles did not in any way imply a falling off in national sentiment; indeed they were, I should say, more exuberantly patriotic than we allow ourselves to appear at home. For the rest, a more warm-hearted, generous, and hospitable set of people than the Smyrna English I have never met, while as representatives of British commerce they worthily maintained the reputation for integrity which we fortunately enjoy in the East.

One regrettable trait they had, though it was fast disappearing, in the shape of a certain antagonism to authority as personified by the Consulate. I think this was a legacy from the times when the Levant Company appointed its own Consuls, and that its members originally felt some soreness when they lost the privilege, and were inclined to look askance on the officials sent out by the Foreign Office to preside over them. The last member of the company had long been under ground, but the tradition still lingered, and the British community at Smyrna was reputed to have worried two Consuls into their graves during the last thirty years. The only overt manifestation of this tendency which I noticed

was a disinclination to register themselves annually at the Consulate as required by the Order in Council for the Ottoman Dominions, or rather to discharge the fee of half-a-crown, payable to H.M.'s Government for the service. They held that this fee was in the nature of a poll-tax, and as such to be resisted by free-born Britishers. Such an attitude was more than unreasonable, considering the privileged position of foreigners in Turkey, who paid no taxes to the Turkish Government, and, in the case of British subjects at least, none to their own. The elder and more sober-minded members of the community grumbled, but submitted. The young bloods, however, one year flatly refused to register, and we were under the painful necessity of summoning some twenty or so of them before the Consular Court to show cause why a fine not exceeding forty shillings should not be inflicted on them according to law. Thereupon the Smyrna Hampdens climbed down, and no more was heard of the matter.

The existence of Consular Courts exercising jurisdiction over their nationals in a foreign and independent country needs a word of explanation. Quite in the early days of the Ottoman Empire its rulers seem to have recognised that special inducements must be held out to foreign Christians to make them willing to take up their residence in a country where the laws and customs differed

so fundamentally from their own, and where their presence was desired for the development of trade, and the increase of the State revenues which trade brought with it. In pursuance of this idea special treaties, known as Capitulations, were from time to time made with foreign States by which various privileges were conceded to their subjects, the most valuable of these being the right of having their disputes settled in accordance with their own laws by their own authorities. The Turks, it is true, reserve for the Turkish courts all cases, whether civil or criminal, in which an Ottoman subject is concerned; but even here the interests of a foreigner who has the misfortune to be engaged in litigation with a Turk are to some extent safeguarded by the right of his Consul to be represented at the hearing either in person or, as is more usual, by deputy, and to have a voice in the decision. Turkish justice being what it is, these are very important privileges, and I for one should be reluctant to reside in Turkey were they abolished.

An Order in Council for the Ottoman Dominions lays down the procedure and defines the jurisdiction of Consular Courts. In criminal cases the Consul sitting alone can inflict up to three months' imprisonment; aided by two assessors taken from the British community his limit is twelve months. Any offence calling for a more

severe punishment must be referred to the Supreme Consular Court at Constantinople, presided over by a qualified Judge. The Consul can try any civil case which he does not prefer, owing to its importance or difficulty, to refer to the Supreme Court, to which also appeal lies. Consular Courts are also courts of probate, so in a town like Smyrna, with a large British colony, a passable amount of legal work had to be done.

Looking back, I am inclined to doubt whether my experience was such as to qualify me for presiding over this or any other tribunal; but at the time I undertook it without the slightest diffidence, and I really think that if litigants did not get much law for their money they at least received substantial justice.

We had no English lawyers in Smyrna, but two Greek practitioners professed to specialise in the British Consular Court. They could, in fact, speak English fairly well, and had some acquaintance with the provisions of the Order in Council. Both claimed to possess the degree of Doctor of Law, and each assured me privately that his colleague had no right whatever to such a distinction. They referred to one another as "My learned friend," bickered in the most approved fashion, and professed a gratifying respect for the Court. Any deficiency in knowledge of the law was compensated by their power of

declamation, and at times they rose to considerable heights of eloquence. "You hurl a bloody stigma at my client's head," shrieked one when defending a Maltese on a charge of assault. "It strikes him and dishonours him for ever!"

Apart from the occasional granting of probate or letters of administration on the decease of British subjects there was not much civil business in the Court. Criminal affairs were our speciality, generally prosecutions of seamen for offences against discipline under the Merchant Shipping Act, and of Maltese for assaults and other misdemeanours. Sometimes one could not help feeling sympathy with the sailormen, whose treatment at the hands of master and officers was often rough, and may well have goaded them into insubordination. But authority had to be supported. Generally speaking, the merchant seaman I came across was of a very uninteresting type; but I remember one John Castle, a refractory fireman, who provided a certain amount of entertainment.

He was originally had up for refusing duty and assault, and got three weeks. One would have thought that confinement in a not very attractive cell, with nothing to do but commune with his own thoughts, would induce a somewhat chastened frame of mind in a prisoner, but it was quite otherwise with Mr Castle. When released from prison he blew

in on me with the joyful assurance of a music-hall favourite. After giving me a graphic sketch of his career, which included enlistment in and speedy expulsion from both Army and Navy, he turned to a young and smiling clergyman who happened to be in the room, and whom he addressed quite gratuitously as "Mr Dimple," and favoured him with his opinion of the British Consular Service. "For one Consul that's a gentleman there's forty that's demons," he declared, but expressly excepted me from this sweeping condemnation, which was good of him considering the three weeks. He then demanded the balance of his wages, which had been deposited by his late skipper. I begged him not to take it, but rather to entrust himself to our care until a ship could be found for him; but he insisted, and in the end left with his money in his pocket.

Next morning Parkinson called to complain that John Castle, being in a state of liquor, had come overnight to the Seaman's Rest, broken much crockery and several chairs, and generally behaved in so riotous a manner as to shock the sensitive clients of the establishment. I suggested that he should summon the evildoer before the Court, but this Parkinson could not bring himself to do, on the ground that the Gospel enjoined forgiveness of an adversary unto seventy times seven. On the morrow,

however, he again came, reported that a no less inebriated Castle on a second visit had demolished all of the crockery and furniture which had survived the first, and asked for a summons. Reminded that his forgiveness account still showed a debit of four hundred and eighty-nine, he said that he could not help that: he had a duty towards his employers, and would like a summons.

Castle, having spent all his money on riotous living, was quite unable to pay fine and damages, and so perforce retired to another fortnight's seclusion. During this second period of incarceration he found religion, and advertised the fact by singing through an extensive repertory of hymns in so loud and discordant a voice as to be quite distracting to all on the Consulate premises. Our Chaplain, who in the course of his duties visited the interesting penitent, taxed him with being not for the first time on the religious lay, which John cheerfully admitted; but he continued to cast his vocal bread upon the waters, in the hope that it might one day return to him, as in fact eventually happened. Some pious passers-by, more charitable or less experienced than the Chaplain, were attracted by the voice of the siren, and impressed by his religious fervour, took charge of him when his time was up, and paid his passage to England, to my great relief.

If I remember right, Castle was the last occupant of the

old prison which, when vacated by him, was demolished and a new one built under the new scheme of reconstruction. It was inaugurated by a British marine, not in the capacity of captive, but as an honoured guest. The Levant squadron was in port at the time, and one afternoon I received a call from two Royal Marine Artillerymen who had a request to make. They said that their pal, whom they had left downstairs, was grievously overcome by liquor, and would I allow him to sleep it off in one of my nice new cells until it was time to catch the leave boat and return on board? After inspecting the patient, I ventured to express a doubt whether it were humanly possible for one in so helpless a condition to recover and walk down to the quay by 5.30, it then being a little after three. One of the men drew himself proudly up and rebuked my lack of faith with the words, "Sir, he's not a Blue Marine if he can't!" And the event fully justified this superb confidence in a famous corps. This was not the only time that our prison served a similar beneficent purpose.

The visits of the squadron to Smyrna were fairly frequent at that time. The call of a single man-of-war is usually a sheer delight to a Consul, but the presence of ten or a dozen in his port at once is apt to be overwhelming. Official visits have to be arranged, amusement on shore found for hordes

of officers, advice given as to shooting-grounds in the season, and there is always anxiety lest the exuberance of the lower deck may cause trouble in the town. The man-of-war's-man thirty odd years ago exercised more self-restraint than his fathers, but was still far from attaining the high standard of behaviour which characterises the Royal Navy to-day.

Smyrna was one of the places at which general leave was given, and then the town became excessively lively with several thousand bluejackets on the spree. One very popular form of amusement was to hire carriages, eject the driver from his position on the box, and then drive the vehicle furiously up and down the quay to the admiration and terror of the populace. In the summer, when tomatoes were ripe and cheap, playful mariners might sometimes use them as snowballs to pelt one another and the inhabitants withal; but such manifestations of high spirit were readily condoned in view of the vast amount of money spent by the visitors to the great profit of the natives. For a few days after the departure of the squadron one could usually buy twenty-two or even twenty-three shillings for a gold sovereign, so great was the glut of English silver.

Of course there were always a certain number of drunks; indeed the wonder is there were not many more, considering the vile quality of the

liquor sold to our unfortunate men for a shilling the bottle, just bad alcohol with a little colouring matter and labelled "Rum." I played an unwilling part in one such incident. One day, while seated in my office, a Turkish police officer burst in on me with a lack of ceremony which indicated a serious emergency. "Come, Consolos Bey, come quickly. The British soldiers are massacring the population." It was hardly any business of mine if they were, but like an idiot I left my legitimate occupations and accompanied him. He led me at the double to a shabby pub on the quay, whence arose the sound of British oaths and the shattering of glasses. A crowd was gathered round the entrance in pleased expectancy, but it scuttled hastily away as six or seven local civilians came tumbling out, behind them in pursuit one small marine, capless, beltless, and with the flush of alcohol and indignation on his face. The last of the fugitives was an elderly man and lame, who could not keep up with the others, and to him Her Majesty's Jolly shouted, "Don't run, you old fool. I'm a British marine, and I wouldn't hit an old man. But," as he caught sight of me, "here's a young 'un." And with that he doubled his fists, and advanced on me in an attitude of deadly menace.

Here was a pretty predicament. My left hand had been accidentally injured lately, and

was bound up. The way of retreat was barred by the spectators, who had reassembled at the delightful and unwonted prospect of a Consul in a tight place, while the policeman had prudently disappeared after leading me into it. An advantage of two or three inches in height over my prospective adversary was much more than counterbalanced by a game hand, and there seemed nothing before me but ignominious defeat, when another marine forced his way through the crowd, and seizing the warrior in his arms, carried him off kicking and protesting. But it was a near thing.

A couple of days afterwards I happened to be standing alone by the gangway of one of the ships of war when a smart-looking marine sidled up to me and whispered, "I am very grateful to you, sir, for not reporting that little incident on the quay. I was that boozed that I can remember nothing about it, but they tell me I behaved something horrid." It was my enemy, though I hardly recognised him.

We had not very much to do with the Turkish authorities, and I can recollect no instance of the Consulate coming into serious conflict with them. Centuries of contact with the foreign trading communities had allowed relations between the latter and the rulers of the country to become systematised. The British colony in particular were on very friendly terms with

the Turks, knew exactly how to treat them, and as a rule settled any little difficulties which might arise in their own way and without official intervention. Sometimes valuable consideration passed, and I knew of an Englishman interested in a mining enterprise who had to pay a bribe of £500 to secure the goodwill of the Vali on his behalf. It was all in the way of business, but what my friend did object to was the indelicate action of the Governor-General in opening the bag of gold in his presence and counting it coin by coin to ensure that the exact sum promised was actually paid. This was quite contrary to etiquette, which demands a certain air of dignified indifference, and usually the interposition of a third party as intermediary in such transactions. The Vali in question subsequently became Grand Vizier, and one can only hope that he brought to the service of the State the same careful attention which he devoted to his private affairs.

There is no denying that corruption existed to a great extent amongst the Turks, nor on the other hand, that the other inhabitants of the country, whether Greeks, Armenians, or Jews, were just as bad whenever they got the chance—but with this difference, that the Turk as a rule sticks to his bargain and performs his side of the contract, whereas the others often do not. Even foreigners, contaminated by the atmosphere

of general laxness, were hardly so scrupulous as one likes to think they would have been in their own countries. I was once invited by a gentleman at Bournabat to look at a large consignment of furniture just received from England for his new house, and I noticed that the numerous packing-cases which encumbered the garden all bore the name and address of a foreign Consul. On asking an explanation of this circumstance, I learned that the worthy man had allowed the consignment to come in his name, and had declared it to be for his personal use, and so exempt from customs duty, as is the privilege of the Consular Body, the real owner in return sharing with him the amount which would otherwise have been paid as import duty. The Consul in question was only a local merchant representing a minor Power, and without salary. It would have been unthinkable for any member of the regular Consular Body to lend himself to such a transaction.

Foreign society in Smyrna was too large to form one family party as at Salonica. There were two large clubs in the town, a Greek and a European, which gave balls in the winter and acted more or less as centres; but the English residents kept a good deal to themselves, and formed a big enough community to be self-sufficing. This was particularly the case with the settlement at Bournabat, which was be-

sides too far from Smyrna for it to be an easy matter to attend any social functions which might be going on in the town. Besides, driving backwards and forwards at night when the trains did not run had always a spice of danger, and a short time after I left the place a party of English people thus returning from the theatre were waylaid on the road by brigands, and two of them carried off and held to ransom. The ransoms were paid and the captives released, but one of them died as the result of the hardships he had undergone.

After a day spent in the town one was quite content to enjoy the simple pleasures of the country. Bridge never failed, nor the more active amusements of tennis, football, shooting, and for a time, cricket. It is strange that cricket never really went down in Smyrna. I managed after considerable exertions to start a club, but it never had much life in it, and collapsed after a couple of seasons. The Smyrna-born English, with the exception of a few who had been to school at home, took the most languid interest in the game, and I suppose that if the truth were told our national pastime does lack attraction for those who have not been brought up to it. While the club lasted we played occasional matches against ships of war, beating single ships and suffering defeat at the hands of the united squadron ; but in the absence

of an appreciative gallery it was hard to maintain the enthusiasm of the players, and the club at no time looked like becoming a permanent institution.

On the other hand, football, the Rugby variety, was very popular. An annual match against Constantinople lent an abiding interest to the game, while the more spectacular nature of the encounter and its shorter duration always attracted a gratifying number of spectators. These were not only English, but natives of all sorts as well. None of the last-named understood the game, and the popular conception of the proceedings was well expressed by a Cavass whom I sent to fetch a carriage to take me to the ground on the occasion of a match, when he reported that not a vehicle was to be had, as "they have all gone to the fight."

The immediate vicinity of Bournabat provided little shooting beyond an occasional woodcock in the pomegranate groves round the village, but if one chose to go some little distance along the Aidin railway fairly good sport could be had in winter with cock and snipe. This entailed very early rising, for the train left the main line station about 5.30, and one had to drive for nearly an hour to get there. Some years, in an exceptionally cold winter, there would be enormous passages of cock, and big bags could be made, fifty couple to a single gun—that of a former

British Consul—being the record. In my time there was nothing approaching this, and any one was considered to have had a satisfactory day who brought home five or six couple. I could rarely get away for a day's shooting during the week, so usually took my outing on a Sunday—unfortunately, the day also selected by crowds of sportsmen from Smyrna, mostly Greeks, who filled the train up with themselves, their dogs, and their bottles of liquor, until my companions and I were glad to take refuge in the guard's van. I have seen over a hundred of these gentry leave by the train, and fifty of them alight at a single station, there to spread over the country, doing little execution, but effectually disturbing what game there might be, up to eleven or twelve o'clock, when they settled down to eating and drinking, principally drinking, until the train returned late in the afternoon. To avoid this crowd I generally frequented two nice little marshes near the stations of Kayass and Trianda, where it was possible to shoot ten couple or so of snipe in peace.

By going farther afield there was a good chance of pig and red-deer, but to go after them implied an expedition of several days, and led one into country which was far from safe.

The fear of brigands made any distant expedition an enterprise not to be lightly undertaken. Smyrna had always enjoyed an unenviable reputa-

tion for brigandage, sharing the honours in this respect with Salonica. The Turkish Government did its best to suppress the evil in its usual unsystematic and spasmodic way, but with no conspicuous success. The gendarmerie whose duty it was to deal with such malefactors were worse armed than the brigands, and the sympathies of the rural population, whose poverty rendered themselves immune, were hardly on the side of the authorities. Furthermore, the paternal habit of the Turks of detaining witnesses in safe custody so long as proceedings were pending did not encourage people to come forward to offer evidence. At times the scandal became so crying that special measures had to be taken to cope with it. On one such crisis a Vali of Smyrna had the happy inspiration of enrolling a large band of uncatchable brigands in the ranks of the gendarmerie, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. For a short time the plan worked admirably: the new gendarmes were up to all the tricks of the trade, and gave chase to their former confrères with zeal and success. But before long the inevitable relapse from grace occurred, the converts reverted to robbery, blackmail, and other improprieties, and the Vali had to acknowledge his experiment to be a dismal failure. Instead, however, of proscribing the backsliders and so driving them into open defiance of the Government, the wily functionary

induced them by fair messages to pay him a visit in Smyrna, where, he said, he had the Sultan's instructions to distribute rewards to them; and when the band, suspecting nothing, marched into the courtyard of the Konak (government house) they were at once shot down by a company of soldiers who awaited them. The photograph of their heads stuck on the spiked rails round the Konak was a souvenir much sought after by visitors to Smyrna when I was there.

At the beginning of my stay in Smyrna a case occurred in connection with brigandage which raised a nice point of ethics. An Englishman had been carried off a couple of years before and held to ransom, and one day I was requested by the police to send him round to identify, if possible, a bad character who had fallen into their hands, and was believed to be a member of the band. He informed me afterwards that he recognised the fellow sure enough, but that he happened to be the one brigand who had behaved towards him with a certain degree of kindness, and had even intervened successfully on his behalf when the rest proposed to cut off his nose and send it into Smyrna as a hint that the ransom was being unduly delayed. Accordingly he refused to identify

him. Was he right? The decision was a difficult one: gratitude for a nose saved in the one scale and public duty in the other.

As an illustration of the kind of ruffian who takes to brigandage, this same gentleman told me that in the course of his wanderings as a captive with the band one of his captors wore out his shoes. He accordingly sat himself down by a roadside and watched the passers-by until a man came up who was well shod, whereupon he shot the poor fellow down, appropriated his footwear, and rejoined his comrades as if he had performed the most natural act in the world.

Pleasant as was existence in Smyrna in the last decade of the nineteenth century, constant office work tended to become irksome after more than three years of it, and it was borne in on me that a change of scene and country would not be amiss. Accordingly, when the Vice-Consulate at Philippopolis in Bulgaria fell vacant in the spring of 1892, I applied for the post, and was gratified by the application being favourably entertained. After nine years' exercise of a profession one cannot well consider oneself any longer as a novice, and the title of the present article would hardly apply to any subsequent experiences.

LONDON RIVER.

BY F. TENNYSON JESSE.

THAT is what sailors call it—London River. "Thames" is only for boat-race enthusiasts and the punt-borne haunters of the upper reaches. And "London River" means the Port of London—the greatest port in the world. Ships sailed from the Port of London in the days of the Romans, and ships sail from it still—which is not by any means a thing that follows as a matter of course in these days when the draught of ships has so increased that many a harbour which flourished in old days is now left bare and desolate. Ships of twenty thousand tons can lie within three miles of London Bridge, and the waters that bore the leather-sailed boats of the Brittany fleets in the days of Cæsar, the up-curved prows of the Saxons and Scandinavians, the galleys of the Mediterranean peoples, the high-pooped caravels of the Middle Ages, the nimble merchantmen of Tudor times, the great three-deckers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the exquisite Colonial and China clippers, most beautiful of all the beautiful ships that ever graced the sea, bear also the broad steel bottoms of modern steamers, and part as sweetly to the cleavage of their towering stems.

There is only one thing the

river below London Bridge is no longer, and that is—a pleasure river. Gone are the joyous days when Cherry Gardens Pier lived up to its name, or when the Kings of England went merrymaking in their golden barges. Gone are the days when Mr. Wilfer and Bella went to Greenwich for a fish-dinner, or when Rogue Riderhood caught an honest living with each corpse he hooked. Nowadays the police boats pick up any stray corpses and call them simply "B.I.D.'s," which in hospital parlance means a Brought-in-Dead, and is still a good thing to get, as it means more money and less trouble than a live man. But the affair is so official now that the charm has gone from it.

Gone are the days when Gravesend was a yachting centre, and the clubhouse is no more. Hardly a white bow breaks the waters of London River any more; never a dock shelters the folded snowy pinions of racer or cruiser. The traffic of the world's goods, the masses of her spices, her ivory, her meats, her fruits, her silk, her wool, all the long list of necessities for the Apes and Peahens, these have gradually turned the pleasure of London River into scheduled utilities. Yet—and here was the inspiration of our pilgrim-

age—because of this there is more pleasure to be found now along the world's greatest waterway than ever before. For what Londoner really knows his river? To him it is not only "liquid history" but liquid mystery, and the pity of it is he should be content to let it remain so. Here is a whole Arabian Nights' Entertainment at his doors, and he never realises its presence. I speak of the magic of trade and of the imperishable beauty of ships.

The *Gudgeon*, an eleven-ton yawl, travel-stained from fifteen hundred miles of cruising in five weeks, sailed up the mouth of the estuary on a grey rainy day, bound for Tilbury tidal basin. Though of the "ex-empt" class, by reason of her small tonnage, she was to have a pilot—rather for the purpose of obtaining a guide, philosopher, and friend than because she would have got into any difficulties. And here I may say that luck went with the *Gudgeon*, and she chanced on a pilot who fulfilled these functions, and whose forebears had all followed the sea, his father having been first officer of the famous *Cutty Sark*, that greatest of clippers, now so happily restored to the land that bred her. *Gudgeon* was armed also with a special permit allowing her to moor off any pier free of toll—rather an empty blessing, as the wash of the steamers and tugs made it impossible for a yacht to lie at any quay without being smashed—but

it invested the *Gudgeon* and ourselves with an almost official air of importance, and, together with a card of introduction from a Port of London authority, made all things easy.

If you draw a line from the Coastguard Station below Havengore Creek to the Isle of Sheppey, a line running north and south just east of the Nore Lightship, you sail over it into the jurisdiction of the Port of London. There the North Sea mingles with the Thames, and sends its waters pushing up-river and draws them down again twice daily, twisting the ships about as they lie at anchor, and causing a pattern of influences that set this way and that way and make of the navigation of the Thames the highly-skilled job that it is. Every fresh jetty thrown out into her course, every change in her huge system of docks and quays, is felt by the current of her blood. The new jetty at Tilbury, where the river is wide and strong, with seven hundred feet of navigable water, has set the tide right over on the southern shore, and made a new item to be learnt in the conning of her ways. The tide is cheated by man, of course, and instead of being an obstacle has become a thing to be used and cozened, to be allowed for in every calculation, and to be made to do half the work for the humans that ply upon the river.

With the wind aft and her mainsail swung out, the *Gud-*

geon ran as far as Mucking Point, when she was close-hauled, and with the wind upon her port quarter headed for the Lower Hope. We sat buttoned up in oilskins in her cockpit, watching the low shores and the yellowish waves, threaded with pearl, go heaving past us as we made a good eight knots on the flowing tide.

You see nearly all the strange craft of the river below Gravesend. The explosive-carriers, the oil-tankers; stubby Scandinavian vessels carrying wicked deck-loads of timber piled golden and shining to the bridge; a ship exactly like the picture of the Ark on Bryant & May's match-boxes, but bearing on her side in huge letters the warning, "Powder Magazine"; and coal-hulks lying black and stark against the green Kentish shore. Beside the oil station the oil-ships were lying, their engine-weighted sterns low, their empty bows upreared, so that they seemed to be suffering from an excess of sheer, and looked as though they would spin on their tails.

A smart Yankee battleship, her lattice-work masts a darker grey than the sky, proudly overtook us; next came a couple of tugs, racing for a job, and regardless, after the way of tugs, of what havoc they caused. They passed, one on either side, smothering us with evil-smelling smoke and leaving a mingled wake that took hold of us and shook us as a dog shakes a rat. A Govern-

ment barge—War Department—probably returning from taking stores to Chatham or Sheerness, was the next to outstrip us, for she was running with a powerful motor, though carrying a most ridiculous rig. Her barked mizzen was her biggest sail, her dirty grey jib slatted back and forth, and between the two was a tiny lug-sail that looked like a dish-cloth hung up to dry.

Further up-river lay a sand-dredger, her high vermilion archway draping her, at a distance, like sweeping curtains, her tall cream funnels standing up on either side of her sloping stairway of buckets like twin pillars. She seemed from afar romantic as some Bakst decoration set in a great grey stage, with her pale columns and vermilion curtains. And at Tilbury lay anchored in mid-stream the ugliest vessel it has ever been my lot to see—the ugliest vessel, surely, that ever came out of any yard. The "Ugly Duckling" of the Navy was a vision of grace compared with her. She was an American liner, the *President Polk*, and the gentleman after whom she is named would be justified in rising to sue her. Completely innocent of sheer, she might have been ruled on a slate from stem to stern, and, like a maggot, she was shaped both ends alike. Her smoke-stack and masts were as innocent of rake as her hull of sheer—the ruler had been shifted to a perpendicular position and three severely straight

upright lines drawn upon the slate. Had I not seen her I never would have believed in the existence of a ship so successful in missing that beauty which is such an essential part of even the clumsiest vessel that it would seem impossible to evade its presence somewhere. She was a floating warning against the too whole-hearted pursuit of utility as an end.

We made fast in the Tidal Basin at Tilbury amidst a steady downpour of rain, and after having to shift twice, finally came to rest beneath a line of clanking trucks, that at last settled themselves also for their Sabbath slumber. The *Gudgeon* was white with a green bottom—that is to say, she should have been white, but her strenuous five weeks up the West Highland Coast, and through the Crinan and the Bowling Canals, her nights spent in dirty harbours next to colliers and barges, the battering she received all down the East Coast from head winds and cross seas that crusted her with salt, and a succession of “dry” ports that, when the tide deserted her, laid her over on one beslimed cheek—all these things had bruised her white flanks and patterned her with dark brown. Tilbury Basin, where the water shone iridescent as a peacock’s breast with crude oil, added a ring of darkness round about her. Yet even so she seemed like a silver birch amid blasted oaks, like the obvious Academy pic-

tures of an earlier day, as she lay with her elegant spoon bow curving up towards the overhanging sterns of three bluff black hoppers, each filled with two thousand tons of Thames mud, and waiting to be towed out to sea to disgorge their unsavoury cargo.

It poured with rain all Saturday night, rain that swished dismally upon the coach-house roof, that dripped in at the open skylight and gathered on the rims of the tiny ports ready to shower inwards at a touch. Yet Sunday morning dawned fair and pale, with a wan sunlight that strengthened as the day waxed, and a soft wind that blew the smoke from chimneys and steamer funnels like plumes about the dappled sky. The *President Polk* looked if anything uglier in the golden light, but everything else on the river seemed transmuted, and the river itself a magic stream of gold, that sent quivering webs of brightest light dancing over the hulls of everything anchored in her waters. It was a morning when it was good just to be alive, far better to be going up London River, knowing you were going to lie up by the Tower, and live on board your boat with all this wonderful and beautiful traffic of ships going on past you.

We caught the early afternoon tide. *Gudgeon* was to go up-river under her motor (and the pilot said afterwards hers was the only motor he had ever known make the journey without a breakdown), but ahead

of us a ketch tacked against a head wind, a bluff-bowed sturdy little trader that yet looked like some squeamish dainty girl as she stood and shivered before going about, taking her time to fill. *Gudgeon* sent a wash slapping against her reluctant quarter and passed her with all the callousness that a boat under power always seems to display towards one that waits upon the wind—much the same rather vulgar insensitiveness that an express manages to convey to the minds of people waiting upon a platform till some humbler train stops for their accommodation.

Gudgeon in her turn was soon overtaken by a Ben Line vessel—the only Line whose ships still boast a clipper bow; and this highly modern steel freighter, with twin Samson-posts that stood up like towers (so odd a contrast to that sentimental touch shown in the curve of her cut-water), rolled the little *Gudgeon* contemptuously about in her creamy wake.

At first the low skyline came down on either hand to a narrow strip of green, only occasional wharves breaking the softness of edge, and now and then clusters of stark-still cranes standing up against the pale autumnal blue in patterns of black at once intricate and austere. The *Worcester*, magpie-painted, lay before the soft green of her Kentish cricket-field; the *Arctusa* seemed somehow sad and

bleak after her better-favoured sister, though the boys leaned over her bulwark and waved their caps at us with enthusiasm. Indeed, enthusiasm is either a sign of badness or of plebeian lack of restraint, for the bad boys of the *Cornwall* treated us as generously, while the aristocrats of the *Worcester* maintained a stony calm. Greenhithe slipped away behind us, preserving, in spite of the material evidences of her weekly activities, a sort of old-world demureness, with her mellow brick houses and Sabbath-quiet quays.

Followed the low shores of Dartford Creek to port and the vividly green marshes to starboard, where sad-eyed horses grazed along the edge, their forelocks blown about their wistful brows and their rough sides brightened to bronze in the pale sunlight. We passed a steel four-masted barque, moored near the southern shore; her sides were flaked with rust, her yards all a-box. She looked as though she knew she had been sold to Germany, to fly the flag dishonoured amongst sailormen in the cold Baltic—she who had been built on Clyde and sailed out of Glasgow to the ports of the world.

Wharves and factories drew close and thick to the water's sides. Erith went by in a maze of chimneys. The black skeleton cranes grew more thickly against a dimmer sky. The great new dock made alongside Albert and Victoria stood up to port and fell away behind

us; the double-ended free Woolwich ferry, with its twin engines and funnels, plied back and forth, packed with workers going from the town of munitions to the gardens on the other shore, where the leaves hung heavy and yellowing upon the trees, and the people walking along beneath them looked like the figures in a modern *fête-champêtre* come to life. And, most moving and beautiful, most tragic and yet stirring sight of all upon the river, we came upon the old *Impregnable*, lying at her last moorings. The sound of the breakers' hammers was stilled for the day, but the traces of their toil showed in the bare bleached ribs that stood up all around her like a thorny crown. She still towers three decks high above the flood, but how high she must have reared when all her decks and the bravery of her poop and forecastle made of her a castle that lifted on the waves! Her despoiled stern, the carved windows vanished and the gilded counter stripped, hung over dirty water littered with tiny particles of her once beautiful body; between her and the shore a great black barge, the funeral barge for her grandeur, was moored beside her temporary stairway, bearing in its heedless maw fragments of carving and oaken planks. Slowly we drew past her, our heads bent back to gaze up at the beauty of her mutilated sides, at the empty eyes of her ports, at that stark ragged rim, those ribs from

which her surely sentient flesh had been stripped, that stood up against the sun-bright sky. Her wide bows, generous as the bosom of a nursing mother, swelled out on either side of her cut-water in untouched splendour. Her raking bowsprit soared out—and, bearing it up and standing out into the clear air, his traceless eyeballs staring up-river as undauntedly in dissolution as ever they had done in battle, was Lord Howe, the epaulettes still gilded upon his sturdy shoulders, his shaven cheeks in iron-hard folds above his stock . . . remaining by his ship, though it crumble into nothingness at his back. . . .

We fell silent and passed on up Bugsby's Reach (who and what can Bugsby have been to have had a stretch of river called by his ineffable name?), past Blackwall, most interesting of all the interesting places on London River, for it was the headquarters of the great East India Company and the home of the famous Blackwall clippers. Here the ships of "John Company" discharged their precious cargoes of spices and ivory, silks, and indigo, and tea. Here Green's beautiful clippers bent their sails for their race across the world, and to this spot they returned with their hard-won fragrant cargoes. Now the intermediate Castle Liners rear their lavender sides and vermilion funnels from above the dock gates.

So we came to Greenwich, on an evening flooded with

sunlight, and brought up alongside a line of barges lying two-deep some way out from the foreshore. The divinely lovely buildings of Greenwich Hospital, on which Wren lavished his rich genius, struck one afresh, as ever, with their dignity and sense of repose, with the spacious calm that is born only of beauty beyond dispute. Pale pearly grey they showed amid the green of lawns and trees, and before them moved in an endless stream the holiday-making folk in their Sunday best, along the paved way that runs between Greenwich town and the river. Children paddled on the strip of shingly beach and swung over the railings to gaze at us, lying so slim and white beside the broad dark barges.

Barges . . . these are the most characteristic because the most unchanging craft of London River. And of all fore-and-aft rigs I think there is none so lovely as that of a barge, with its great raking sprit, its height of spars, its spread of wine-dark canvas. How delicious it is too to note the individual care bestowed on each barge by its owner, the little touches of fancy-work in gilded scroll and ornamental tiller, above all, in the high-flown naming of the dusky beauties!

There is something humorous in a barge with brailed-up main and mizzen that imparts to her beauty a Cockney rakishness. This is because of the

impertinent lift of the sprits, the little mizzen so exactly repeating the big mainmast, line for line, for all the world like a saucy little boy imitating the action of an unconscious elder stalking in front of him. Bargee folk are amiable when not ruffled—the roughness of their tongues when annoyed has not been overstated,—and on this Sunday evening the families sat about their beamy decks with an air of settled domesticity amazing in people who perforce lead such a migratory existence. On board the *Nell Gwynn* a swing had been hung in the mizzen rigging, and the daughter of the boat disported herself therein, her hair already done up in rows of little rag-tied sausages for another week's curling. Mother, wide and ample as her home, sat by the hatch, and father leant against the gaudy tiller smoking placidly, staring at us in tolerant amazement.

What a night that was . . . spent in rushing up on deck to fend *Gudgeon* off from *Nell Gwynn*! Every steamer that passed—and there were very, very many—did so at a pace that set all the moored craft rolling and bobbing. Nothing much for black barges whose low sides lip the water, but for *Gudgeon*, who still strove after whiteness . . . Plop-plop-plop went the water, slapping at her nose as she tucked it into the wash of dirty waves. Crunch — crrrrunch went an unprotected portion of flank against a neighbour. Crrrrreak

went her rope fenders and the improvised canvas bags, stuffed with any old thing, that were flung over her rail. She was so tiny amidst these stern daughters of toil. She looked, with her spoon bow and dainty stern and her exceptionally fine sheer, like a slice of melon lying between two rows of vegetable marrows.

Our pilot rejoined us, and we set off down-river to visit the yard before which the *Impregnable* was being broken up, and to which her bones were being borne. It was the workmen's dinner-hour, and we made *Gudgeon* fast alongside the old ship and climbed aboard. What spaciousness on those vast decks cleared now of tackle! What a sense of unsinkable solidity, of goodness and strength! Golden and gleaming, they stretched away from us as we stood by the great heel of the bowsprit—itself a whole massive tree—and described a gentle curve towards her middle, and hardly narrowed at her square stern. Above our heads the bare ribs, that must have supported yet another deck, went up into the sparkling air. Her hatches yawned wide in the golden stretch of planking, and down one we went, into the dimness of the gun-deck. Here the huge oak stanchions stood like trees in a forest, and the sunlight, striking in through the deep-set square ports, shone athwart them and threw long shadows over the deck. Her capstans still stood firmly

rooted, so massive that it seemed as though even a whole ship's company would hardly have sufficed to wind up the colossal cables.

Below farther, to the cockpit, where the darkness held dreams of what it must have known in the thunder and gloom of an engagement, when the wounded were carried there, and the men worked to get out the ammunition, and only noise and smells and flickering lantern lights and the shocks of the recoiling guns shaking the fabric told of what was going on above. . . .

We ate our lunch still moored alongside the old warrior, looking incredibly tiny and white beside her lofty black flank, incredibly modern against her storied antiquity. Then we started the motor and again bore away up-river, past Greenwich; past the wide-spreading system of the Surrey Commercial Docks, with their delightful names—Lady Dock, Lavender Pond, and the like; past Execution Dock, now known as Dudman's or Deadman's Wharf, and displaying nothing more sinister than the steel arms of cranes against the sky. And so to Limehouse, where we landed and went for a stroll in Pennyfields, to see the yellow men hanging about the doorways and standing in their shops. It may have been a holiday for the Celestials, for many of the little low-browed shops were shut, and all the Chinese who lounged about the streets were dressed like Picca-

dilly dandies, in creased trousers, soft hats set at a smart angle, quiet but smart ties, and socks that matched. . . . True, there were licensed lodging-houses for Chinese that looked sordid and filthy, but the men themselves were not only sleek but clean, spotlessly clean, with flashing teeth, and ears fine as curves of lemon-peel set close to their shining black heads. Only the English were frowsy and slatternly. . . .

And the children! Deplorable, of course, the intermixture of races, . . . but the beauty and charm of these little half-castes! Creamy skins, sloe eyes set with a captivating and very slight obliquity, straight, bobbed, dark hair, and rosy mouths that opened to let forth a flood of Cockney English! Adorable dolls, how difficult for the casual observer, especially when that observer is a woman, to see anything but your deliciousness, to connect you with problems of the future, with the disadvantages they say always cling to a Eurasian. . . . You seem exquisite puppets of porcelain, magically endowed with life, and bringing to these sordid London streets the lesson the East has learned so well—the lesson of beauty. How badly we need to learn it, the contrast these people present to ours in our own streets makes plain.

Back again to the *Gudgeon*, and so on once more. We are now in the thick of things indeed. Big steamers coming up astern give their warning

notes—four low blasts and one short when turning to star-board, and four blasts followed by two shorter when wishing to turn to port. Barges sail proudly up upon the tide. “Dummies” go wallowing past in tow of a fussy tug, or work their placid way across stream with only one man leaning back at an incredible angle on the stern oar. And here let me mention that the slowest, least manageable, ugliest craft on the river is the river’s lord. The dummy is the mere hulk of a barge, without mast or engine, nothing but a low dirty hull, and yet it rules the river. . . . For even as the strength of the weakest link is the strength of the chain, even as on the safety of the life of the most worthless of the community depends the safety of the most valuable, so the strong and the swift and the manageable on the river have to wait upon the will of these unwieldy craft, that only use the tide up and down, with a man to steer by digging in a vast oar and leaning his weight on it, pulling her head round at an inch an hour. . . . Across mid-stream the dummy slowly staggers, and big steamers have to watch out for her while she herself hastens never a jot. Even the tugs, those snappy terriers of the river, have to respect the helplessness of the tyrannical dummy. In fact, the dummy is very like a certain type of woman—a truly womanly woman.

Strings of them worked slowly across stream as we watched, and over them the pigeons flew and settled with a soft flurry of grey wings, pecking up stray grains of nourishment. We circled past the dummies, and so on up to Tower Bridge, where we blew our horn to attract the St Katherine's Dock authorities. An interchange of shouts. Had we permission to dock? Yes, we had. Could we wait a bit? Yes, we could. We made fast to a buoy and lay watching the pageant of the river. The Pool of London glowed like a lake of topaz in the evening light; the towers of the bridge stood up dark against a luminous sky. Over it the traffic flowed ceaselessly—big motor-buses, drays, taxis, in a moving frieze, an ever-shifting pattern of shapes and colours, minute as though seen in a crystal. A steamer comes up-river, and before making Cherry Gardens, hoists in her fore-part a black ball as a signal to the bridge that she wants to be let through. Then slowly she creeps on, her engines stopped, only enough way on to enable her to manœuvre. Traffic vanishes as though by magic on the high-swung road, and slowly the bastions rear up into the air, till they stand like two swords held on high for the entrance of a bride. The ship heads for the southern bastion until her bridge is on a level with it, then she goes slow ahead: . . . it looks like suicide to a layman. *Hard-a-starboard!*

and a rattling whirr as her anchor is let go. . . . She is stopped! Then her engines are given a kick astern, and the water churns yellow about her screw. The tide setting off the northern shore keeps her stern clear of the northern pillar when it would seem she must swing on to it. Instead she is given a kick forward, and, swinging round against the pull of her anchor, she comes to rest like a lady on the far side of the Tower Bridge.

Slowly the bastions descend again, the stream of traffic flows across once more, and the incident is closed. Such is the etiquette of a ship visiting the river between Tower Bridge and London Bridge.

Our own entrance of our refuge is less spectacular. The dockmaster shouts to us, we cast off, have to make way as usual for some dummies, then slowly chug forward towards the dock gates. . . .

There are some things that, for no apparently adequate reason, take the heart with a sense of beauty. To different people different causes of thankfulness and ecstasy. I preface with these remarks lest I should seem extravagant in what I say of the moment of entering St Katherine's Dock. Only three other things have ever given me that aching sense of almost intolerable joy. One was the first sight of the Venus de Milo, standing with her head raised staring out over my own insignificant cranium when, as

a little girl, I first crawled to her feet at the end of her long gallery. The second was sighting two conical mountains called The Pitons, on the West Indian island of St Lucia, in the early dawn, after sailing all night on the open deck of a tiny sloop, wet through, hungry, thirsty, and tired. Like two golden pillars at the gates of Paradise they seemed, their luxuriant verdure ethereal in the moted light, the very water golden about their feet. The third was when, flying on a foggy day, the machine got through the fog into sunlight, and I looked down suddenly on a stretch of dazzling whiteness two thousand feet below, and realised that this was not a snowy range of mountains, but a field of cloud. . . . And the fourth was this entrance into a small dock in London River.

Gudgeon turned her nose to starboard, slipped through the dock gates, and we were in a different world. We had left behind us bustle and noise and strife, and we slid into a calm deep pool surrounded by high bronze cliffs, austere and aloof as a crater ring around the pool in a dead volcano. Though the warm coppery glow of evening still held, it was touched here with a softness it had not known on the broad river without—a blur, a bloom, as it were, upon the very air, like the downy edge of an owl's wing. Deeply, softly blue, the shadows already went far down into the still water, although

the slants of sunshine lay across the western corner of the square, rounding the edges of the pillars that formed the colonnade, and gilding the edge of the quay to brightness. Pigeons, as softly blue as the shadow, rose into the slant of sun, whitened, and swept again into the shade.

St Katherine's Dock is the cloister among docks, the re-cluse among worldings, the retreat among the bare and bustling basins whose traffic is open for the world to see. Once within, her narrow entrance, set at an angle, seems to disappear, so that one lies as in a pool enclosed. The tall warehouses, of mellow bronze-hued bricks, flat-faced, unbroken by futile ornament, seem to go up and up above one's head. All around the thick plain pillars on which they are built stand in a stately row, the shadows of the arcades deep between them. At their feet the bronze-hued water lies tranquil, reflecting the pillars dimly, like ghosts of their sturdy selves. The pigeons wheel softly from shade to sun, not a sound of traffic is heard; a corner of the Tower of London is visible at an angle of the dock, where a small Georgian house stands low and modest between the tall warehouses; above it, in the distance, the high white façade of the new Port of London Authority headquarters, looking lovely and exotic as a pale orchid growing beyond a sober English garden.

We bade farewell to our pilot

and went along the interminable St George's Road. We bought a crisp French loaf, carrots, onions, a newspaper, to see how the world was getting on. We found, after many weary turnings and knocking at gates shut for the night, one gate still open to Shadwell Basin, and producing the card that admitted us everywhere, wandered round about, looking at the ships that lay there, their hawsers fitted with tin cones to prevent the dock rats swarming up them at night. One little frame-house, tarred black, and with an elder-tree growing before it, still gave an old-world touch to this basin otherwise so utilitarian of aspect after our own cloistered calm. We reached our home at last, foot-sore after some four miles of hard pavements and cobbles, and had fried steak and onions, and slept in a calm that lapped our very souls. Only once or twice in the night I heard the pattering of the pigeons as they explored the deck, and wondered vaguely if it were rats. . . . And towards morning the ubiquitous dummies, let in at Heaven knows what hour, started nosing round the dock without even a man in charge, and kept shoving their blunt noses against our long-suffering side. During the days that followed much energy was expended in pushing off those dummies.

We were English, and dwellers in London in the ordinary way, and yet we went to the Tower,

. . . and not for the first time either, though I do not wish to boast. And I say that no one who has only gone sight-seeing from the shore knows its full delights. The Tower that morning was full of Americans—one heard practically nothing else spoken,—and yet we were the only explorers there. We had *landed to see the Tower*. The river ran sparkling before the old grey walls, the trees were banners of green, the jackdaws looked huger and glossier than ever, but the deep mournfulness of the Tower's history gripped the mind from the moment of entering. It was almost a relief to look across to the modern commonplace steamer we had seen berth the evening before, and by her help be enabled to catch hold of the blessed fact that the injustices and cruelties of the Tower were over and gone, that the sorrow which has permeated her walls till her very stones cry of it has found its place in the whole pattern of creation—or so we hope.

How lovely to come back to St Katherine's at midnight, after a commonplace day of work and business, during which one hugged the golden knowledge that though one looked like any one else who went to an office and a restaurant, one really lived on board a boat in London River! How high and blank the wall looked, and how uncompromising the door as we knocked upon it! And then the joy of the moment when the new policeman opened

it and said, "Can't take the lady in, sir!" to be told the lady lived there! To see him stand back saluting a polite good night, and to creep between bales and packing-cases, find the ladder and crawl down it on to our own dew-wet deck. . . .

It was not without a sombre interest, to explore the warehouses and find that all the huge crates filled with sewing-machines and china and glass and billiard-balls, that had been discharged there, all came from Germany. . . . There was one cart, piled from end to end with ivory, brought by a British ship from British possessions, that was going to be reshipped to Germany, there to be made into billiard-balls and resold to us. . . .

Ivory and apes and peacocks. . . . Here was the ivory, here, too, the silly peacocks strutting in security; there were the sedulous apes who have beaten us at our own game of seafaring and merchant-adventuring. . . .

To this has London River come, to this has British shipping come, and at this it will remain as long as Germany subsidises her merchant fleet so that they can take lower freights than the ships of any other nation, and as long as our only way of meeting the menace is by allowing murderous deck cargoes and raising the Plimsoll mark. Has the war, that has failed in all else, done any lasting good to our merchant marine? Does the

public, do those in authority recognise more truly than they did that it is the merchant service, which in old days was the navy, from which the present navy evolved, which holds the seas of the world for us during peace as it kept it during the war? The merchantmen feed us, clothe us, bring us our drugs and our jewels and our extras of life, as well as our necessities (and who shall say in modern life exactly where the one begins and the other ends?) Our very breakfast-tables are furnished by reason of the merchant service, and we sit at them all incurious, and complain if the tea is not to our liking or the sugar is still too dear. . . .

London River is not only the peaceful end of the voyage to the merchantmen who dock there. It is, as well, the respite from ceaseless care and responsibility, the temporary end to dangers such as landsmen would think out of all reason and seamen accept as a matter of course; a blessed hiatus in continual stress, an oasis in a desert of storms and worries. Not a sailor enters that loved river without a lifting of the heart, though he returns to an ungrateful country that recognises him not. Such is the charm and danger of England! And everything that has gone to make her the irrational, beloved, annoying, beautiful country that she is, may be found in that most characteristic manifestation of her—London River.

THE WHITE RAM.

BY AL KHANZIR.

I FIRST heard of the White Ram in this wise. Outside my door one November afternoon I found two strangers waiting. The one—tall and lean, with the clean-cut features of the typical Aryan, and whiskers dyed that startling shade of red which your elderly Mussalman affects—was draped in an old shooting-coat with leather patches, obviously the gift of some previous master several sizes stouter than himself. The other, a dark coarse-featured little man of Dravidian type, was quite simply dressed in the prevailing fashion of the countryside—a cotton shirt, with a cotton sheet wrapped round his loins and reaching to his ankles.

In reply to my question, the taller of the two told me that they were shikaris who had come in with news of oorial. Now I had already shot a lot of oorial, so I wanted nothing less than an exceptional head. And Indian shikaris are liars as proverbial as fishermen, so I was prepared to discount their story liberally. But in the end they managed to convince me in spite of myself. Perhaps it was the absence of all the usual promises and palpable exaggerations: their story was strangely non-committal.

In their proposed scene of

operations, so they said, only very few oorial survived; trapping had accounted for the rest. But no sahibs came there to shoot, so among the few survivors of the traps were one or two old rams. And notably one regular patriarch white with age. "We saw him as we came from our village three days ago," they assured me; "the infidel has horns such as no sahib has got for years." But he has the cunning of the devil himself besides—how else could he have lived so long?—and there are miles of broken country for him to hide in; so, if you come, the rest is according to kismet—we promise nothing." Still that was good enough, and I there and then decided that the Christmas leave then in the offing should be spent with my two friends in quest of the White Ram. So began an enduring friendship, and a quest which was to last on and off for the next two years.

My two henchmen were a queerly-assorted pair. Bahadur Khan—he of the shooting-coat—was an Awan. You will find the Awans now settled in the belt of broken country between the Jhelum and the Indus; but no one can say exactly whence the clan originally came. Bahadur, of course,

in his pride of orthodoxy, would tell you that they have been Mussalmans from the beginning—of Arab origin, descended from Hazrat Ali himself through one Kutb Shah, who came to India in the tail of Mahmud of Ghazni. But the relics of Hinduism still preserved in their tribal customs show that story to be a palpable yarn, for you will find the Awans still actually employing Brahmans as their family priests. Perhaps, as some would have it, they were Bactrian Greeks driven south from Balkh by Tartar hordes long before the days of Islam; and it is true that the regular features of a young Awan will sometimes call to mind the Greek god of popular fiction. Perhaps, as others again will tell you, they were an Aryan tribe which came up from the South to conquer and occupy their present home. Or perhaps—but who can tell? In a country where the original Aryan conquerors were followed by Scythian and Persian, Greek, Parthian, and Hun; where wave after wave of Moslem invasion has swept by—Ghaznavi, Ghorî, Moghul, Persian again, Durani, sometimes to be placated by gifts of hawk and hound, but oftener to leave a desert in their wake, after the manner of Feroz Shah Khilji, to take one instance only, whose boast it was that he had “made the blood flow in Janjua,¹ so that a boat might have glided

within the hills of Jud,”—in such a welter what hope is there of tracing the true origin and history of any particular tribe? But as we know him to-day the Awan is a loyal servant of the Crown, a good yeoman-farmer, and a soldier second to none in the Indian Army. Though an immaculate milk-and-water citizen he emphatically is not; in his home circle, feuds, vendettas, robbery, and violence are as the breath of his nostrils, and he values human life no more than a straw.

Gamoo, on the other hand—Bahadur’s satellite—had no pretensions to being an aristocrat. He was a Musalli—of the lower strata of Indian society, where you find living in successive layers the menials who perform such offices as that of blacksmith, leather-worker, scavenger, and the like. Your man of this type is often a born hunter; for his forebears—hanging on the fringes of the community—have been driven from time immemorial to eke out a precarious livelihood by catching wild beasts of all sorts and sizes for their daily bread. And Gamoo turned out to be the best tracker whom I have ever known. To watch a Gond tracking a buffalo or a bison through the parched May jungles, a Khanjar spooring a wild boar, or a hillman following a bear, each in its way is an education; but to watch Gamoo as he

¹ The Janjuas are another local clan.

puzzled out the line over sheet-rock and iron-hard going—the line of a sheep, mark you, across ground often fouled by the subsequent passage of village flocks,—that was to see surely the very acme of tracking.

Now do not imagine for one moment that I propose to divulge the whereabouts of the happy hunting-ground to which Bahadur led me. No: this is not a sportsman's guide. And I like to think that there is perhaps some grandson of the White Ram there in the old haunts still. Then some day I shall summon Bahadur and Gamoo to me, "souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me," and we three shall sally forth again "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

But stay, this much I shall do for you. As you doubtless know, in the year of grace 630 A.D. a Chinese pilgrim came to visit the Buddhist shrines in this part of the world. And, on his return to China, Hsüan Tsang—for that was our pilgrim's name—compiled a remarkably complete tourist's guide to Northern India, with bearings and distances in *li* all carefully noted. So here are your sailing directions *à la* Hsüan Tsang. According to *my* reckoning, the White Ram's ancestral home bears precisely 120 *li* S.S.W. from the tank of Elaptra the Dragon King, which was, of course, one of the Four Great Treasures visited by Hsüan Tsang; so, once you

can make up your mind as to where the Dragon King kept his tank, the rest will be plain sailing, won't it?

But let me try to describe to you the country in which the White Ram lived. The predominant feature in it is the river—the spinal column, as it were, or vital marrow of the whole,—a river running a shallow trickle in a wide bed of sand and gravel, and readily fordable except in time of flood. But beware of it in a spate, or just after its waters have subsided, for its quicksands are no respecters of persons, and have been known to suck down a Viceroy's elephant before to-day. On either bank are low-lying strips of rich alluvial soil, narrow ribbons of cultivation dotted with wells and tiny *dhoks*—the homesteads of the cultivators. Behind the cultivation, again, rise two opposing walls of grey stony bluffs—everywhere steep, but often scarped in sheer precipices. And stretching thence far back into the hinterland a perfect maze of ravines run, narrow sheer-sided cañons where they find their way out through the bluffs, but—as you follow them inland—dividing and subdividing and ramificating in every direction till the whole surface of the country for many miles is seamed and scarred with a wild confusion of lanes and furrows, all below the general surface of the ground. Here and there the ravines open out into great quarry-like depressions, perhaps

half a mile in width, often with an island in the centre, its summit flush with the surrounding plain. Stand out in the plain above, and you will never suspect what a network of *nalas* surround you. The plain looks to be an open undulating glaciis sloping gently to the river from the distant hills, but it is, in fact, a regular labyrinth, a subterranean mountain-system of limestone cliffs, steep grey shale-slopes, sandstone ridges, and bluffs of dusky-red nodular marl—all hewn out by the action of the rain.

A hard naked land it is, too, girdled by far-off ranges of even harder and more naked hills; and the stunted patchy scrub of acacias and wild olives and dark-green lustrous *sanatha* seems only to intensify its nakedness. But it has a fascination all its own—a fascination given only to the breezy, open, waste spaces of the earth. And every here and there you happen on an unsuspected streamlet deep-set in a sunken glen, its banks ablaze perhaps with the wonderful pink-and-white blossoms of the oleander—a fairyland of close green turf decked out with pigmy forests of bog-myrtle and wild pomegranate and tamarisk. It is then that you appreciate the feelings of the Emperor Akbar at the sight of just such a green oasis in the wilderness only a few miles from the place of which I write. He was on his way to Kashmir, so the story runs, through the parched

grey plains of early summer, when all at once he came on running water and a vista of pure delight. And his monosyllabic cry of joy has become history, for the place has been known as “Wah” ever since that day. Not much of a beauty-spot perhaps: only a spring, some green turf, and a neglected orchard. But, then, beauty is so largely a matter of contrast after all; the oft-sung Persian garden would look a very poor affair against the background of a Kentish countryside in May.

Such, then, was the country in which our oorials lived: not big or difficult country such as that in which you stalk a markhor or an ibex, but grueling going, and ground that afforded unlimited scope for hide-and-seek. There, in the seclusion of the ravines, they spent their days, often disturbed by passing goatherds or grass-cutters, but yet contriving in some miraculous way to slip unseen from place to place. There of a morning and an evening they would emerge to feed on the coarse grass of the glades in the thorn-scrub. And sometimes, very early or very late, you might see them—shadowy figures in the twilight—as they revelled in an outlying field of young green corn.

My first expedition saw me within an ace of getting the White Ram. S—— and I had taken our Christmas leave together, and we began by working the country inland from

the river. But at first we did not find a trace of our ram, though other and lesser oorial we met in moderate numbers, and gazelle in plenty. Then we moved our camp to a little village actually overhanging the river, a village which I shall call Dhok Huriar. And the very next morning, soon after leaving camp, we met some villagers on their way home from a tour of their traps. Rams?—yes, they had just seen four: one of them with an enormous head too, and nearly white. The White Ram?—it sounded very like it. We hurried on in the direction pointed out to us, and then through the glasses we saw them. Below us in the river-bed, about a thousand yards away, the bluffs ran out across the cultivation to form a bold promontory round whose base the river curved; and there, on the backbone of the promontory, and commanding the country in all directions, the four rams were lying. There was just a chance, though, that a particular ravine of the many which wound their way down to the fields might take us within shot of them, so off we went to work our way across to it. That ravine might have been made for us, for, when we had crept down between two sheer walls of rock to its opening on to the fields, we found the rams actually within two hundred yards of us. And I had won the toss for the shot at the White Ram: he was as good as mine.

But it was not to be. Have you ever tried to hit the target on the range just as another rifle is going off in your ear? Then you will know what happened. S—— and I had agreed each to take our ram and to fire together. And S—— had never shot an oorial before, so in common decency I *had* to let him fire a fraction of a second before me. S—— killed his ram; but my bullet went high—and the White Ram went off. We never caught another glimpse of him that trip. That was the end of the first round, and it found him leading very comfortably on points.

Still there were other compensations. First and foremost, in that wonderful Punjab cold weather it was good to be alive and in the open—from the chilly dawn with its ice-skinned pools through all the hours of brilliant sunlight, till darkness fell again and you listened to the clanging of the grey-lag far above you as they passed from the sand-banks of the river to their nightly orgies in the fields.

Then there were see-see to be chased at odd moments in the ravines round camp: these guileful little blue-grey partridges who scurry and twinkle among the stones in front of you till you are reduced to perspiring frenzy, and slyly interpose a rock between their persons and your shot when at last you force them to take wing. And there were de-

moiselle crane who arrived of an evening on leisurely flapping wing, to croak a trifle querulously at the quality of the local barley crop—large dignified grey birds, who stalked about their meal with a weather-eye open extremely wide. Most succulent eating, these, and more than worth the trouble you took to stalk them.

And one day, I remember, we came on the fresh tracks of a panther—probably a traveller, Bahadur said, for panthers rarely stayed there long. These panther-tracks found the old man in a reminiscent mood; and, as we sat in the shade of a rock while I ate my mid-day sandwiches, the talk strayed from panthers to tigers, and thence to other things.

"In the days of the Sikhs," Bahadur remarked, "tigers were quite common; there were fewer people then, you see, and times were too unsettled for them to live out in these little dhoks.

"Yes," he went on, between contemplative puffs at the Abdulla which I had provided; "those were bad days—the days of the Sikhs. Over towards the hills there Gulab Singh of Jammu held the country. And many a time I've heard my father say that, whenever Gulab Singh had trouble with his taxes, he would turn a Dogra regiment loose and pay them a rupee for every Mussalman's head they brought him." Zulum,¹ sahib,

And the old man smoked for a few moments in silence.

"I myself have seen only three tigers," he began again; "they came in the winter, and none have come now for many years. As for oorial, though, in my young days you might count them by the hundred—you didn't find iron traps then set in every field. Now if you want to see oorial you should go to Diljabba in the Salt Range. A wonderful place that for oorial: few big heads, but plenty of them. Have you heard the story of Diljabba? Once upon a time, they say, a Kashmiri fakir came to the hill—the same whose grave you'll see still just beneath. And he asked the shepherds, who were bringing in their flocks, to give him a drink of milk. But they wouldn't give him a drop: their ewes all had lambs, they said. Then the saint turned their flocks into wild sheep, who all ran off into the hills. That's why there are so many oorial on Diljabba now." And the old man gave a cackle of satisfaction at the shepherds' discomfiture.

The story is typical: saints used to be as plentiful hereabouts as they were in Christendom—

"In good King Dagobert's palmy days,
When Saints were many and sins
were few."

And they were kittle cattle

¹ Cruelty and oppression.

here, too, as the saltiness of the one and only lake in the countryside goes to prove. The waters of this lake used to be sweet, till a certain saint—by name Baba Farid—arrived on its banks one day. There he found the women busy drawing water. But when he asked for a drink they tried to pull his venerable leg, which was not only wrong but foolish—they told him that the water was salt.

"Quite right; it *is* salt," said Baba Farid. And when they came to drink it, salt it was. And salt it has remained. That's the worst of a saint—his jokes so often persist long after they have ceased to amuse.

Another day, as we worked along a ravine, I saw Gamoo stoop to pick up some large object that lay where it had been washed out of an eroded bank of shale.

"Look, sahib," he called out, "this is a rakshasa's tooth." I looked. It was obviously a bit of fossilised jaw-bone, with the molars still attached. To judge by his dental development, the late owner must have been about as big as a house.

"A rakshasa?" said Gamoo in answer to my question. "Why, a rakshasa is an ogre. This one here was a small one—a mere child. But at home I've got some teeth as big as a grindstone. There used to be plenty of rakshasas about in the old days, before Rasalu killed them all; we often

pick up their teeth in these nalas."

I scented a yarn. "Who was Rasalu?" I asked, subsiding reposefully against the shale-slope. Gamoo settled himself back comfortably on his heels beside me.

"I can't remember exactly who he was," he said, "though I *think* he was a son of the Raja of Sialkot—ever so long ago. But every child knows how he killed the rakshasas. In those days, you know, the seven kings of the rakshasas lived at Mankiala—the 'City of Injustice,' as it was called—over there behind Khaire Murat Hill," and he waved a hand towards Khaire Murat, who towered like the hull of a great battleship in the middle distance. "And they used to eat a man of Mankiala every day—chosen by lot. Till one day Rasalu came to Mankiala. And there he met a woman in the streets who was singing and weeping at one and the same time as she went about her work. So he asked her why she sang and wept; and she told him that she sang because it was her son's wedding day, and wept because that very day he had drawn the fatal lot. Then Rasalu said that he would take over the lot that her son had drawn. And when his time came to be eaten he polished off all the rakshasas one by one—including even cunning old Sir Kap the Gambler, who played for human heads, and who had never once been known to lose.

Yes, I thought that everybody knew the story of Rasalu and the rakshasas."

I felt that I had been profoundly ignorant of rakshasas. But now my blood was up; for no one had ever found the remains of a rakshasa before—of that I was certain. So when I got home I hastened to look up the 'Ramayana' to see what it had to tell me about them. Now the 'Ramayana,' which is, of course, the oldest Sanskrit epic, is said to have been written about 500 B.C., so you may think that its zoology is a trifle out of date; but I can assure you that, as an authority on rakshasas, it is still the last word. This is what it told me about them:—

"Some disgust the eye, while some are beautiful to look upon; some have long arms and frightful shapes; some are very fat and some very lean; some are mere dwarfs and some prodigiously tall; some have monstrous bellies, hanging breasts, long projecting teeth, and crooked thighs; some have the heads of serpents, some the heads of monkeys, some the heads of horses, and some the heads of elephants."

The heads of elephants—that was it; any one with half an eye could see that my particular rakshasa had been of the elephant brand. So I packed up my specimen carefully, and sent it off to the Bombay Natural History Society with a polite

little note to the following effect:—

"Herewith please find the fossilised teeth of a rakshasa, which I recently discovered.

"The rakshasa is, I believe, an animal entirely new to science, so you will, of course, appreciate the enormous importance of my discovery.

"When it comes to the question of giving the creature a name, I should be much gratified if you would call it after me. This is, I understand, the usual procedure."

But, would you believe it, they were not in the least bit thrilled. My specimen, they wrote, was a fragment of the jawbone of an extinct species of elephant: what particular species was not clear, for our knowledge of extinct elephants was still most incomplete. That was all. And not a word about rakshasas. An extinct elephant, indeed! I knew better. But that is your scientific body all over—a regular closed corporation when it comes to accepting the discovery of an outsider.

It was not until the following winter that I was able to renew my quest for the White Ram. I had given Bahadur a pair of field-glasses and a roving commission to keep in touch with him meanwhile; so, when the time came, I was met with all the latest information.

This time we went straight to Dhok Huriar. When we arrived there, we found a party of police in the village. The usual rickety string bedstead

was produced for me, and as I sat in the shade waiting for our baggage-camels to appear, a knot of old acquaintances gathered round to gossip. A few days before, so they told us, the local Hindu shopkeeper had received notice that, unless he produced a good fat sum at a certain hour and place, he was not long for this world—hence the police.

"Fazl Dad's gang again," remarked Bahadur. "I heard they were lying up somewhere hereabouts."

"Who are they?" I asked.

"Oh, there were five of them originally," Bahadur answered, "all Awans from round about. Let me see: there was Akbar Khan from Campbellpore—he was their first leader. He'd murdered nine men altogether, they say, including a Sayyid.¹ And a man called Feroz Khan was his right-hand man. But last year Sultan Muhammad Khan—he's a rissaldar from Kot across the river there—came home on leave. Kot had just been raided by the gang and his father killed, and he set himself to track down Akbar and Feroz single-handed. He shot Feroz dead, and Akbar was hanged. Yes, I remember seeing Akbar once: a fine figure of a man he was too—it seemed a pity." And the nods and murmurs of assent in the audience told me plainly that Akbar was already looked on almost as a popular hero.

"Now Fazl Dad is their

leader," Bahadur went on. "There is a big reward on each of the gang, and the police caught him once too—through an informer. He got as far as being sentenced to be hanged, but he escaped from prison. And that same night he broke into a police station and stole a rifle—he meant to get level with that informer, you see.

"They had given the informer an armed guard of two ex-soldiers; and, as he was sitting with one of his guard in the courtyard of his house a few days later, all of a sudden they found themselves looking into the muzzle of a rifle shoved over the wall—it was Fazl Dad. There was a shot. Then Fazl Dad strolled over to the informer as he lay on the ground. 'I said I would shoot you,' he shouted to the dying man, 'and I have. Now, before you go to hell, don't make any mistake about it—I, Fazl Dad, shot you—remember!—Fazl Dad!—Fazl Dad!' That, sahib, is always the way with informers; they get their money, but they never live to enjoy it, so what's the good?" And again the audience murmured its unqualified assent.

"Next day Fazl Dad was across the border; but, like all the rest, he has to keep coming back—the tribes soon get tired of them when their money runs out. And his house is always watched—the police will get him some day. Oh no, they're

¹ Descendant of the Prophet.

not likely to touch a sahib; but perhaps we'd better camp near villages while the gang is about." There I agreed with him.

We worked the country round Dhok Huriar early and late for the next five days, but we never saw a sign of the White Ram. He *had* been there just before—there was no doubt of that; and we were constantly meeting goatherds and grass-cutters who told us that they had seen him, but—when we managed to find the beast they had seen—he never was the one we were after. So at last we decided to move camp a few miles down the river to a new stretch of ground, and on the sixth morning Bahadur and I started to work down parallel to the river to our new beat. But we had hardly gone two miles from Dhok Huriar before we came on the White Ram's fresh and unmistakable tracks in the sand of a nala-bed—he was still somewhere about after all.

We took up the tracks at once. After we had been going about an hour they led us into the head of a long shallow ravine; and as I looked down it I caught the merest glimpse of some animal as it disappeared from view about six hundred yards away in the bed—it might be the beast we were after. So, creeping back, we made a detour to bring us to the edge of the ravine directly over the spot where the beast had been. But when we peered over, there was nothing visible

in the bed below us, nor anywhere else as far as we at first could see. Then all of a sudden a greyish spot well up the opposing slope caught my eye, and when I got my glasses on to it, I realised that I was staring straight into the face of the White Ram, whose body was concealed behind a rock. A fraction of a second later he was gone; but he had seen more than enough of us, and for nine weary hours we tracked him without once sighting him again. For the rest of that trip he vanished into thin air. It was the end of the second round, and he looked a winner all over.

The beginning of the following April saw me back again at Dhok Huriar. On that particular trip I had the most charming camp-site. It was on a terraced field of green barley overlooking the river, and we found a clearing, ready cut in the green crop, just large enough to take my tent. Overhead were the branches of a mulberry-tree which threw a dense patch of shade; underfoot was short green grass; and all around the rustling whispering barley—I had come straight from two months of wandering in the blistering wastes of Mekran, so you can imagine how delightful it all seemed.

The weather was growing distinctly warm already; so each morning we used to start at dawn, and I was wakened by the sound of the Azan from the village mosque close

by—as the first glimmer of light showed in the sky. The sentiment may be hackneyed ; but for all that there is something indescribably impressive in the gorgeous Arabic of the Call to Morning Prayer, no matter where you hear it—whether intoned from a minaret of the Jamma Masjid or from the platform of the little mosque of Dhok Huriar.

We had reliable information that the White Ram with a smaller companion was somewhere in the offing, but for the first four days we drew the customary blank. The fifth day is for ever marked with red in the annals of my shooting life. We started the day with a false alarm : one of our flank patrols sent us off on a wild-geese chase after two small rams, and we did not discover our mistake till after an hour of tracking. But we had gone only a mile or two farther when, as we topped a rise, Bahadur seized my arm and dragged me down behind a rock—there, 400 yards away on the top of a little hillock, two oorial rams were standing. They had not seen us, for—as we crouched—they began to move slowly down the slope towards us.

“ Look ! ” whispered Bahadur, shoving the prism-glasses into my hand—“ there is not another ram like that on any hill.” It was the first clear view that I had ever had of the White Ram ; and I knew the feeling which—if you are lucky—you may perhaps feel

once or twice in a lifetime—when at last a really great head slides into your glasses’ field.

The rams were coming steadily nearer, so I waited till—at about 280 yards—I got a good broadside chance. The White Ram collapsed at the shot, and then rolled struggling and kicking down the slope towards us.

I guessed in an instant what had happened : the bullet had gone high, merely grazing his spine, and next moment he would be on his feet again and off—I knew it. But the men were already rushing forward, effectually masking my fire. That terrible failing of the Muhammadan shikari—always intent on cutting a beast’s throat while there is still a kick left in him, so that the meat may be *halal*—once before it had cost me the best Kashmir stag that I am ever likely to see. Perforce I joined in the stampede ; and, as I started, the ram struggled to his feet. In another moment he was galloping—gaining strength at every stride. My two despairing shots only hastened his departure. And then he was out of sight. Can you picture my feelings of blank dismay ?

We picked up the tracks at once. At first there was plenty of blood ; but, to add to our anxieties, the day was dark and cloudy, and the rain might come down in torrents at any moment to blot out every mark. The tracks led us through a long winding valley. Once we got a distant view of

our ram, but he was off again in a moment. And all the time the blood was getting steadily less and less.

After we had been going about two hours, the tracks brought us out within a mile of a village; there were men and flocks everywhere, so it seemed certain that the White Ram's point must still be far ahead of us. The ground here was a mass of stones, and village sheep had wandered over it in every direction. Our progress grew slower and slower, and it was only by laborious casting that we managed to progress at all. And once Bahadur pointed out a place where our ram had made a tremendous bound which told us plainly that he was very far from crippled.

And then, when hope had reached its lowest ebb, before my very eyes the White Ram rose to his feet beneath an overhanging rock not 100 yards away.

This time the bullet did not miss. "*Aram hogaya*"—he is at rest,—Bahadur muttered, slipping his knife back into its sheath; the White Ram was so obviously dead that by no stretch of imagination might his meat be made *halal*. There he lay, the cunning old ram of my dreams—so old that his coat, powdered thickly with white hairs, was near the colour of smoked silver. He was mine at last—knocked out in the third round; but, before we had even galloped him, the rain was coming down in tor-

rents—the gong had all but saved him.

All this happened I shall not say how many years ago. Since Bahadur and I hunted the White Ram the war has come and gone, and the Awans have left their bones scattered broadcast in three continents. What other changes there may have been I know not. Perhaps Bahadur himself is dead; perhaps the last oorial has now been trapped in the ravines of Dhok Huriar. But fortunately oorial are now preserved in other large tracts of country; for it would be a thousand pities if they were to disappear from the hills and gullies that they have known so long.

What tales they might unfold—these same oorial—could they but tell us of the sights that their race has seen, of the men whom they have watched pass by along the great road that runs through their domain from Central Asia down to Hind. They would tell us of the days when their country was a satrapy, and Skylax and his Persian archers hunted them as "Bahram that great hunter" hunted the wild ass; of the days when Alexander's army, with its long pontoon-train of groaning country-carts, marched by to victory over Porus at the crossing of the Hydaspes. They would tell us of the ebb and flow that followed Alexander's death; of Seleucus chased from India by the Mauryas; of the coming of Demetrius and the Bactrian Greeks; and of Hermæus and

the Parthian Gondopharnes. They must have watched the passing of the White Hun hordes, and seen the smoke that rose from the sack of Taxila. They must have heard the sounds of strife on the fateful day when Pirthwi Raj and the flower of Indian chivalry went down before Mahmud of Ghazni—the first of Muhammadan invaders—after that wild charge of 30,000 Gakkhars¹ which went within an ace of victory for Hind. And perhaps their keen eyes followed the Gakkhar swimmers on that dark night by the Indus, before the cry went up from the emperor's pavilion on its bank to tell that Shahab-ud-din Ghori had paid with

his life for a sea of Gakkhar blood. And Timur the lame Tartar, and Nadir Kulai the Persian, and Ahmed Shah the Afghan—they must have watched the clouds of dust as each in turn passed by to Panipat and victory.

Before they saw the coming of British bayonets to stop the old road from the North and to bring peace to the land of Hind.

And now once more “the old order changeth, yielding place to new.” Are they to see the old road open once again, and “the whole realm reel back into the beast”?

It has never been the prating politician who has kept the old road closed.

¹ A local clan.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

A. E.'S 'INTERPRETERS'—A SENTIMENTALISING OF CRIME—THE ONLY JUSTIFICATIONS OF REBELLION—NECESSITY AND SUCCESS—THE FASCISTI—WHEN "DIRECT ACTION" IS BENEFICIAL—'THE JEW OF MALTA.'

IN his Preface to 'The Interpreters' (London: Macmillan & Co.), A. E. tells us, arbitrarily, that he has laid his symposium in a future century, lest passion and transient circumstance should confuse the discussion. He does not make his purpose good. There is no hint of changed thought or unfamiliar sentiment to connect his argument with the future, and as we read his pages we discern, clearly enough, the disgrace of Sinn Fein through the mist of his idealism. Nor does his rhetoric, which he asks us to believe is detached from the late and present rebellion, persuade us to take a kindlier view of the basest and cruellest episode in modern history. No fine words can palliate the crimes of murder and arson; and as A. E. attempts in vain to separate himself from the outrages of yesterday and to-day, so neither his mysticism nor his philosophy softens to our hearts the tale of wrong done by his friends. We can see in what he calls his nation's violent assertion of its right to freedom a growing record of unexpiated and inexpressible crimes.

The symposium is held in the glamour of a prison and under the shadow of death. They who share in it are all

to die on the morrow, except the Imperialist, who, having been thrust into the jail by mistake, talks excellent sense, and is therefore scouted by the others. "This prisoner," says the Individualist of the Imperialist, "is not of us. He is for Empire, and is not worthy to die with us." For the rest, the talk is all of the wrongs of Ireland. "After centuries of frustrated effort," we are told by the Poet, "the nation, long dominated by an alien power which seemed immutable, had a resurrection. It would join the great procession of States, of beings mightier than man created by man. It would become like Egypt, Assyria, Greece, or Rome." We have heard all this before. If only the Irish had been allowed, they would have built a greater temple than the Parthenon. They would have composed a greater epic than the 'Æneid.' Would they? Genius is never gainsaid. The man who is not "permitted" to sing songs has no songs to sing. Forms of government check not the spirit of art; and if genius be there, it matters not whether they, in whose breast it is alight, live under a democracy or serve an autocrat. Ireland has been only too free to express her

temperament, and she has expressed it most commonly with the revolver and the bomb. But when poets have been born upon her soil, they have been welcomed there as elsewhere. A. E. has confessed that "the domination of an alien power" has not frustrated his effort; and no tyrant ever threw obstacles in the path of Synge or of Mr Yeats or of Mr George Moore. It is not thus, then, that the rebellion in Ireland may be justified or excused.

And yet before Ireland has a place in the great procession of States, before she makes good her claim to stand by the side of Athens and Rome, she must answer to the charges of which she stands arraigned. They who make a revolution, with all the blood and suffering which it brings with it, must be very sure that they have an adequate cause for their action, and that they sustain their cause like men and not monsters. By whatever test Ireland is tried, she fails miserably. If it was freedom she aimed at, she already enjoyed it in larger measure than any of her neighbours. Does freedom mean the privilege of influencing the deliberations of Parliament? She had always more than her fair share of representatives, and was able to hold the balance in the Commons' House of the once United Kingdom. Does freedom mean to live as she would? Never was any check put upon this freedom. The spoilt child of the Empire, she received many

gifts, lavishly bestowed upon her and denied to the others, who raised no jealous clamour at their less happy lot. The Individualist who plays his part in A. E.'s symposium tells us after what he aspired. "I wish to be free to come and go," says he, "to do, to think as I will." He must have had a rare experience if any hindrance was put upon his footsteps. Of late years he has been allowed not only to come and go as he would, but to kill and rob as he would. Not only has he been given a larger measure of "freedom" than the most of men know: he has claimed such license as may safely be yielded to none. And now when the Irish have won their "freedom," what have they done with it? They have used it brutally to extinguish liberty of movement and of conscience wherever they find it. No man may walk abroad in the streets to-day save in terror of his life. Innocent and peaceable men are robbed and murdered. They are asked to look on while their houses are burnt and while their animals are mutilated. Women are outraged to serve the lust of the apostles of freedom. "If we had not been restrained by alien power from control over our destiny," says A. E.'s poet, whom we may take to be a picture of himself, "we would have manifested the national genius in a civilisation of our own, and it would have been moulded nearer to the divine polity." They are no longer restricted: they are

at last manifesting the national genius in a civilisation of their own. And how do they manifest it? In such an orgy of blood, lust, and destruction as the world has seldom seen. They are doing their best to destroy whatever was noble in their life and of good report. The monuments of their past are being wiped from the earth. The Four Courts, and all that they contained of national records, are in ashes. The thread of tradition is everywhere ruthlessly snapped. Nobody is allowed to express a sentiment or an opinion which seems hostile to the sentiment or the opinion of the present rulers. Not long since a distinguished historian saw his life-work destroyed, and all possibility taken from him of reconstructing what the bandits had burned, merely because his view of his country's story did not harmonise with the view of the unlettered gunmen. That is the kind of freedom which Ireland cherishes, the freedom which makes slaves of all those who refuse to bow the knee to the new unbridled tyrants.

The revolution in Ireland, then, was made without a sufficient cause. The "freedom" which was its pretence was instantly violated. Moreover, it was besmirched at every step of its progress by such a debauch of crime as will never be blotted out from the page of history. Whatever she has gained—and it is little enough, since it does not include law or justice or self-control,—has been gained by crimes so cruel and sordid

that they can never be forgotten nor condoned. It is hard to understand that the ruffians who have been given their "freedom" on such terms can take any pride in it. The structure cannot but be, and cannot but remain ignoble that is built upon so foul a foundation. Presently, when its hideous outlines have shocked the eyes of right-seeing men, it will totter to its fall. Every step in the revolution was marked by torture and cruelty such as most savages would spurn. To tie a defenceless Englishman face downwards behind a motor-car, and to compel the girl whom he loved, with pistol held at her head, to drive him along a rough road was the pleasant pastime of an afternoon. Yet it may be doubted whether all the "freedom" which the torturers have won was worth one so vile an outrage. "How but by force," asks A. E.'s poet, "can the nation free itself from a power which has taken its sceptre from it, which has killed its noblest children and broken up its laws?" What this nonsense means we seek not to inquire. We would only make a distinction between one kind of force and another. The force used by Mike Collins and his murder gang would never have been justified, even had there been oppression in Ireland, which there was not. The Irish say that they were fighting an antagonist stronger than themselves, and so every enormity was permitted to them. No inequality will ex-

cuse their barbarities, and no "national genius" will ever be manifested by men who stoop to cowardice so vile. They will build no Parthenon, these pitiless assassins. They have no great deeds to celebrate in recorded verse. And when they give high-sounding names to miserable exploits, they do but intensify their blackguardism. One of the noblest exploits of Mike Collins and his friends was to murder English officers lying unarmed in bed by the side of their wives. This feat of heroism the Sinn Feiners call the battle of Mount Street. They do not lessen their deed of shame by miscalling it. They do but paint their savagery with a deeper colour of disgrace.

One of the prisoners in A. E.'s symposium says that he joined in the business because he wanted excitement. "I never felt really alive until I was body and soul in our conspiracy." A loud expression of the lust after blood, and little else. And the strangest thing about it all is the solemn pompous attitude of A. E. himself. For his part he has nothing to complain of. He has gone about his work unchecked and unhampered. All the freedom that he needs has been given to him without stint, and we would more willingly have heard what he has to say, if he had ever uttered a word of protest or discouragement to those of his fellow-countrymen who, afraid to come out in the open and fight, did not scruple to assassinate their opponents, and

foolishly believed that they might build a free and honourable State upon a basis of crime. A. E. concludes his work with a threnody, entitled "Michael," which without extravagance we may assume to be addressed to the memory of Mike Collins. A. E. has no sense of humour, but even an Irishman might have hesitated before he placed a halo of sentiment and sacrifice upon the head of the hero of Mount Street, of the man who was stirred to the highest point of indignation by the charge that he had not really committed all the crimes which he claimed as his own.

If you want a complete contrast to the rebels of Ireland, you cannot do better than consider the Fascisti, who have brought back Italy to law and order. They are revolutionaries too, if you like, but it is a counter-revolution at which they aimed. While the Irish showed themselves both cruel and useless, the Fascisti were at once brave and competent. The Irish waded through a river of blood for the mere pleasure of the bath, and even had they crossed to the other side, which they did not and never will do, they would not have seen the next step. Nor do the Fascisti give way to the idle boastings which make the Irish ridiculous. They do not brag that they could have produced a Phidias and an Æschylus if only they had been allowed. Their sense of humour is too keen to permit them to look upon themselves as the

modern Athenians. But when they took hold of a city, they proved at once that they were able and resolute to manage it honestly and well. Wherever they went, they made life for the citizens easy, calm, and decent. Not content with the making of a counter-revolution, they quietly restored the cities of Italy to comfort and prosperity. They reorganised the tramways; they reduced the rates; in brief, they performed all those tasks which it is the business of governors to perform; and they did all this without brutality, and with the expenditure of the fewest possible words. The Irish, on the other hand, have done nothing, since they were given their freedom, but talk and shoot: and as their enemy, the British soldier, is no longer in their midst to preserve order, they have no resource but to turn their guns upon one another.

Now, revolution can justify itself only by necessity and success. Those who become rebels for a dream or for fun or for the Sadism, which is rebellion's commonest excuse, must be judged not as soldiers but as criminals. The Fascisti were stirred to the stern measures of repression which they took by no evil motive. They saw their country dying of communism and of all the wicked fancies which have brought Russia to irretrievable ruin, and they determined to save her. They knew that starvation and misery always followed in the wake of those who

robbed and killed for the sake of freedom. They recognised the truth of the infamous St Just's confession, that "food disappears in proportion as liberty extends," and they resolved that Bolshevism, with all the vileness which it brings with it, should not invade Italy. Nor was it merely Bolshevism against which the Fascisti revolted. They detested with equal vigour the parliamentary Government, which was helpless to check the spirit of communism growing in intensity day by day. They were keenly conscious of the fact that democracy had failed them in a crisis, as democracy always fails honest men. They caught the politicians at their old games of measuring pressures, and rearranging groups to what they believed would prove their own profit and advantage. What mattered if the country fell, so long as they kept their places? The position of Signor Mussolini was not unlike the position of the elder Pitt, when he recognised the paramount necessity of ridding England of Newcastle. He saw the King and the country driven by a foolish Minister to the edge of a precipice. Without hesitation he resolved to avert the catastrophe, and happily he succeeded. "I knew that I could save the realm," said Pitt, "and that none other could." "The Government knows how to govern, and will govern," said Signor Mussolini with equal confidence when he took office.

It is said that the Fascisti are reactionaries. And why not? Is reaction so base a crime that we dare not mention it without averted eyes and a specious apology? Had it not been for wholesome reactions—and reaction is nearly always wholesome—civilisation would have been in ashes centuries ago. There is no inherent virtue in progress, whose object is generally to drive us with the herd of swine down a steep place into the sea. Indeed, the Fascisti were and are reactionaries in that they believe firmly in union. They have reacted against the class warfare which, to the advanced demagogues of to-day, is the clear sign of progress. They cherish a firm faith that perpetual strife between one class and another is not for the good of the State, and that the ignorant and incompetent have no natural right to govern merely because they are numerous. And so they have welcomed to their ranks men of all classes; they have carried into civil life the solidarity which prevailed in the trenches. They have rejected at once the arrogance of intellect and the vulgar snobbishness of labour. They refused to bow the knee to this man because his brow was higher than the brows of others, and to that man because his hands were horny with toil before he took on the easier, more profitable job of political agitation. But they gladly welcomed to their ranks all men, no matter what was their job, if only they would

devote their lives to Italy, and would subordinate their prejudices to the cause of sound government.

Again, we are told, the Fascisti were guilty of "direct action." They seized the reins of Government by force. Again the objectors are in the right of it. We cannot deny that the Fascisti were guilty of "direct action," but they were guilty of this misdemeanour only when the enemies of the fatherland had started a policy of direct action on their own account. Had they stood idly by they would have seen Italy ruined by the bribes which frightened politicians are wont to throw at greedy Communists. Were they to abstain from forcibly seizing the reins of office because labour likes to think that it has a monopoly of force? Certainly not. The Fascisti have saved their country by a bloodless revolution; it was not for them, patriots with a love of law and order, to indulge the Sadism which inspires the policy of the Communists. They did not confuse the means of revolution with the end; and they have the satisfaction of seeing that the hand of authority is once more upon Italy, that the underground plottings of the Bolsheviks are completely foiled.

The counter-revolution of the Fascisti is memorable also, because it was supremely practical. It was not made for an idea: it was not the outcome of an idle dream. There was nothing nebulous or exotic

about it. It was made in Italy for the Italians, and it had no other end than the proper settlement of the country. The Fascisti did not talk: they acted. "They have already in the last two years," writes Sir Rennell Rodd, than whom none has a better right to speak of Italy, "accomplished much useful constructive work. The chaos prevailing at the great port of Genoa under the tyranny of a union which the weakness and timidity of former Governments had endowed with autonomous powers, has been reduced to order and converted to efficiency, to the immense advantage of commerce and shipping. Analogous reforms are being enforced at Naples, and Trieste will also feel the influence of the Fascisti. The Red Leagues of the Ferrarese, where most of the hemp we use is grown, have been dissolved, to the relief of a great number of unwilling adherents, now enrolled as members of the Fascio, which has secured for the workmen more advantageous contracts with the employers. . . . Actual achievement, and the brief period in which it has been accomplished, point to a remarkable organising capacity and a powerful central direction which have secured absolute loyalty." Truly the Fascisti may be proud of what they have done. While the Irish have been content to cut one another's throats, or to burn the houses of loyal citizens and to murder their owners, the Fascisti have

restored peace and prosperity to Italy, and in accomplishing these great ends have shed but little blood and brought suffering to but a small handful of people.

Above all, the Fascisti have conferred an inestimable boon upon Italy: they have governed her. Now government is no mere trick of speaking at the hustings or of expressing loudly the exploded views of Russian anarchists. It is an art, like another, that is difficult of mastery, and can be learned only with industry and self-sacrifice. It has its separate rules, its own technique; and these rules, this technique, are thoroughly understood by Signor Mussolini and his friends. Moreover, there never was a country which did not like to be governed when it had the chance. All men are happiest when they may go about their business in untrammelled security. Nobody likes to live under the shadow of the tree or in fear of a revolver pointed round the corner. The sternest punishment made to match newly-invented crimes brings comfort even to the dangerous "idealist" himself, who very soon shares a common grave with his victims. And the Fascisti have lifted from Italy a heavy burden of fear. The honest citizen knows full well that he will be protected in the doing of his plain duty; he is assured that he will escape on the one hand the red fury of the Bolshevik, on the other the timid injustice meted out furtively by the insincere par-

liamentarian; and every day as he goes about his toil he thanks Signor Mussolini and his friends that they have learned the art of government, and have dared to apply it to him and his like.

Nor, let us hope, will the lesson taught by the Fascisti be lost to us. They have made it clear to all the world that two can play at the game of "direct action." The bullies of the Labour Party have long pretended that in that game all the weapons were in their hands. They have not scrupled to threaten that if they did not have their way instantly, like the spoilt children that Mr Lloyd George has made them, they would bring the whole country to starvation and death. They cared as little for the ruin which they hoped to compass as did Lenin and Trotsky, and they had not the sense to see that they too would be involved in the misery which they hoped to cause their fellow-citizens. And they arrived at this conclusion because they thought that they were not as other men are, as indeed in another sense from their own they are not. They demanded, therefore, that to them the last excesses should be permitted. They talk of themselves and their class with bated breath, and, as far as we know, their leaders have never once expressed a generous sentiment about any other class than their own; they have never thought of their country, except as something from which they can extract higher wages

for less work. No sooner do they become leaders than they submit patiently to the orders of their ignorant followers. There was a time, for instance, when Mr Clynes seemed to possess some of the gifts of leadership. *Corruptio optimi pessima!* He surrendered presently to the extremists, and to-day has lost the trust and respect of honest citizens which once were his. From the moment that he joined with other leaders in threatening direct action if Poland were supported in its opposition to the Red Army, his influence upon England was gone. And now he clamours for the capital levy as an infant cries for the moon, and when it is demonstrated that the gift of it would bring the whole country to ruin, he throws contempt upon those whom he calls the "rich." "Most of the hostility to our capital levy proposals," says he, "shows that rich men are not facing their obligations in the days of peace as poor men faced theirs in the days of war." Of course it shows nothing of the kind, and by a subtle and false implication it does what it can to stir the poor up against the others. It suggests, if it means anything, that the poor alone faced their obligations in the days of war, when the truth is that all classes served their country to the best of their power. There were exceptions in all ranks—that is true, and it would be well if Mr Clynes remembered that, while there were profiteers among the rich, who made money out of their

country's danger, there were profiteers also among the poor, who made the war an opportunity of demanding higher and higher wages by the familiar method of the strike. No, there is no selfishness in the objection to the capital levy, an objection pressed, moreover, by those who have most cheerfully sustained a heavy burden of taxation. But our Labour leaders are as careless as the Irish about the results they may produce. They have learned no lessons from Russia or elsewhere. And it was left to the Fascisti to teach us that a counter-revolution may save a country without bloodshed, and that "direct action" is not the exclusive privilege of the rebellious and discontented; that in good hands it may prove an instrument not of destruction but of construction.

The Phoenix Society, which for some years has been doing useful work, was happily inspired when it put upon the stage 'The Jew of Malta.' It is more than a century since this play of Marlowe has been heard in any theatre of ours, and no dramatist is better worth hearing than he who has ever been applauded for "a mighty line." And 'The Jew of Malta' gains a vast deal upon the boards, especially when it is represented with the taste and reticence which Mr Norman Wilkinson brought to its decoration. The setting was elegant, and the personages of the drama were not

overdressed. The acting of the Jew spared us nothing of his brutality, and none of the characters was out of accord with the spirit of the play, save only the Ithamore of Mr Thesiger, who is too strongly mannered, too intimately of his own time, to represent the thought and movement of another age.

'The Jew of Malta' is a play of words, not characters. It has no lack of coloured verse, perhaps too much of coloured rhetoric. The most of its characters are mere vehicles of bombast, who mouth the brutalities of such men as never lived and spoke upon this earth. Not even the tireless gusto of Marlowe could make his fable credible, and we shall best understand his play if we regard it as a monstrous farce, a careless burlesque of human speech and human action. The Jew himself is fair game. He is, as Charles Lamb says, "brought in with a large painted nose to please the rabble," a kind of Punch, who belabours all who come nigh him with a stout staff. An Elizabethan audience would appreciate the enormous crimes of the Jew, and would delight in his miserable end. He would have got from Marlowe's contemporaries not a shred of pity. They would have laughed incredulous at his crimes, and greeted with hilarity the just torture of his death. In brief, they treated him, no doubt, as joyously as the children of to-day treat Punch and his victim Judy, and even a modern

audience fell not short of a high occasion. When Barabbas compassed the death of Mathias and Lodovick, or poisoned all the nuns in the convent, the laughter of the spectators was loud and unrestrained.

That Marlowe desired to produce this effect is clear enough. Here is not the stuff of tragedy. Even the many murders contrived by Barabbas cannot drag a tear from our eyes, because we do not believe in him or them. The whole action of the piece passes in a world of unreality. Shylock, with whom it is natural to compare Barabbas, is depicted as a man, although he is a Jew. As he insists, he is a man of like passions with ourselves. "Hath not a Jew eyes?"—so he puts the question to his contemnners. Devoutly as he worships wealth, he still cherishes a father's love for Jessica. "My ducats and my daughter" is a genuine if confused cry from the heart. But there is no whimpering about Barabbas. He sends the rice to the convent, the rice which shall poison his daughter, without a murmur of regret; and when she dies, he exults that she dies by his hand. "Dost thou not sorrow for thy daughter's death?" asks Ithamore, and Barabbas replies: "No, but I grieve because she lived so long." The inhumanity is so loudly expressed that it can move only a smile. But the passage in which Barabbas and his slave exchange

confidences outdoes all the rest of the play in braggart villainy. "As for myself," boasts Barabbas—

"As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls;
Sometimes I go about and poison wells."

And Ithamore, not to be outdone, swears that he has spent his time—

"In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley-slaves."

But his best exploit was "at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneeled." There, says he—

"I strewed powder on the marble stones,
And there withal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laughed a-good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts."

A fine couple of knaves to travel the world together! But they cannot, nor are they asked by their author to inspire terror or pity. And when Barabbas, falling into his own trap, perishes in the fire contrived for another, his death does no more than arouse another incredulous laugh. Even his last dying speech—

"Die, life! fly, soul! tongue, curse thy fill, and die!"—

creates nothing but a mild tremor of amusement. Yet none would dare to laugh at a performance of 'The Duchess of Malfi.'

THE GENERAL ELECTION.

WHEN the Tories shook off the burden of the Coalition at the Carlton Club, Mr Chamberlain's defeat was cheerfully ascribed to Belgravia's love of reaction and to the envy of Mayfair. Since that day of good omen the General Election has come, and has left the Conservatives in full possession of the field. A clear majority over all parties is all that Mr Bonar Law can want, and it seems as though we have done with Coalitions and all the evils which they beget for many a long day. The campaign which preceded the Election was not conducted with much enthusiasm. Mr Lloyd George and his friends were fighting for no principle, except for the principle of high and comfortable offices for themselves. They pushed to the furthest possible point the doctrine of indispensability. We are the brains of the country, they said in effect: make room for us and our brains or the Empire will perish. It was a pitiful spectacle to see Lord Birkenhead stumping the country on the brains, so to say, of himself and his late colleagues. In eulogy he was tireless of himself and of them, and perhaps when it comes to praising brains, it is more prudent to listen to applause than to lead it. The retorts of the other side are easy and destructive. Second-rate brains,

it was hinted, are better than second-rate character; and of what use is it to possess brains if they will do no more for you than they did for Mr Lloyd George and Lord Birkenhead?

However, we have witnessed something new in the world's experience. We have seen a retired Lord Chancellor running up and down the constituencies, extolling his own talents and the talents of Messrs Chamberlain and Churchill. These heroes, we take it, are endowed with first-class brains, and we gladly dispense with them. Their characters have been drawn in changing colours and with various emphasis by Lord Birkenhead, eager to destroy the precedent of the dignity of the Woolsack. Of course, said he, Mr Chamberlain and himself could have got out of one camp into the other if they had wished. "But they happened to be men"—these are Lord Birkenhead's *ipsissima verba*—"who took the view of loyalty that the word they passed on Monday must not, and could not, be broken on Tuesday." Why not? Mr Chamberlain and Lord Birkenhead are artists in the quick change. How shall he boast his loyalty who, once Galloper Smith, went over in an instant and took Mike Collins by the hand? Or how shall he assert that he would not break Monday's word on Tuesday who,

being returned to Parliament to uphold the doctrine of Unionism, which he had always professed, suddenly repudiated the doctrine, and persisted in clinging obstinately to the name of Unionist, which he had outraged?

The speeches of the remnant of Mr Lloyd George's party were from first to last personal and acrimonious, though we may except from the charge of acrimony Mr Lloyd George's tender description of "the little place" in Surrey to which he hoped to retire, where he had planted a rose-tree or two, and where the snowdrops would raise their heads to greet him when he sought the repose of his own garden. For the rest, Lord Birkenhead informed us that he was the captain of his soul—a captaincy that none is likely to dispute with him; and Mr Chamberlain proved, in a reference to the Irish Treaty, that he is ignorant alike of parliamentary usage and constitutional practice. "It is well," said he, speaking of Ireland, "that the great Treaty of Peace should be signed by the very men who opposed its execution, and that the Irish race should have the assurance that the last and bitterest Die-hard of them all has surrendered in his ditch." This sally was greeted by "laughter and cheers," which suggests that Mr Chamberlain's audience had no better understanding than he had. There is no surrender of the bitterest Die-hard. Upon the

Government which follows the Government of Messrs Lloyd George and Chamberlain is laid the irksome duty of clearing up their mess. It is they who approved the Treaty, not the Die-hards. It is none the less the Die-hards' business to see that it is properly executed. What would Mr Chamberlain have the Die-hard do? Would he prefer that he should repudiate the signature of his predecessors, even though he believes those predecessors have betrayed their country? Of course he does not, and when he twits the Die-hards with doing what honour and custom compel him to do, he uses a poor mean argument, so poor and so mean that it was presently borrowed by Mr Churchill and Lord Birkenhead.

As Mr Bonar Law and his colleagues bore themselves during the Election with dignity and restraint, so they face the duty of government with a useful majority and with a simple desire for good administration. The country asks for firm government and not wild experiment, and the Government of Mr Bonar Law is strong enough to do what it deems right, without bribing the electorate, as Mr Lloyd George bribed it, out of the public funds, and with promises to do a dozen things which were out of his reach. Above all, we shall return to the straight paths of constitutional government. In getting rid of Mr Lloyd George we have rid ourselves of a tyrant. No

longer will that adroit practitioner take charge of every Department in the State. The responsibility for the proper conduct of home or foreign affairs, let us say, will once more be laid upon the shoulders of the Secretary of State. Instead of having one brain (first- or second-class), which meddles with everything, we shall have many brains, as of old, each of them modestly accountable to the House of Commons for what it devises. Thus there will be restored to us not only the Cabinet, which had degenerated into a roomful of clerks, but also the effective control of the House of Commons, which existed, in the days of Mr Lloyd George, merely to register the decrees of a powerful Minister. And there is a good prospect that government by scandal is at an end, that we shall no longer be shocked by the acting of cheap melodramas in foreign capitals, or the settling of grave international questions by itinerant circuses.

We shall, indeed, be content with Mr Bonar Law's Government if it call as little attention to itself as possible. Now that it is the Government's aim no longer to keep a well-advertised leader before the people, we can do without the limelight man. We ask no more of our governors than that they should look after their own Departments, and substitute economy for the reckless extravagance which has been our bane. It is easy for Mr Lloyd George

to ridicule the Conservatives for not having a showy policy, such as delighted his followers in the good old days, when he and his friends believed that they were there for life. But we have no need of a showy policy. There is nothing that clamours for reform at home except expenditure, and abroad we ask nothing else than a continuous policy, which may ensure a good understanding and a tranquil agreement, in France and the United States.

It was in his wayward management of foreign affairs that Mr Lloyd George did us the greatest injury. Nobody on the Continent knew for more than a day or two whether he was on the side of Germany or of France. And our friends the French were always in a difficulty. They were compelled to take sides for or against Mr Lloyd George, according as he seemed to lean to their side of the question or to recede from it. And finally, despairing of his consistency or intelligence, they separated the English from their Prime Minister, and showed themselves at once pro-English and anti-Lloyd George. Mr Lloyd George's disappearance has put an end to this ambiguity, and henceforth, if we only show a fair measure of candour and sympathy, nothing shall impair the friendship which binds us to France, and which is the best warrant for the peace of Europe.

But if the new Government

is to hold its place, it must keep itself free from all entanglements. It must not threaten us with a new Coalition. When Messrs Lloyd George and Chamberlain explain that they are ready to sacrifice themselves in the service of the country, no chance of "sacrifice" must be given them. We have not forgotten the view which they take, that no matter of principle has ever divided them. You may be sure, when there is no dividing principle, that there is no principle at all. And assuredly those "Unionists" were not sensitive who gave Ireland over to the wild Sinn Feiners. In the new Government, then, there must be no place made for Mr Lloyd George or Mr Chamberlain, for Lord Birkenhead or Mr Churchill. These gentlemen may all be the captains of their own souls; they may all be in the happy possession of first-class brains. But they have failed lamentably in the task of government, they have been disloyal, in one way or another, to their constituents and to the country, and they will exercise their first-class brains, henceforth, more suitably in the busy task of opposition.

If the new House of Commons lacks some old familiar faces, it is asked to admit within its doors some who never should have been permitted to enter there. Truly, the House will be a safer place now that Mr Churchill is excluded from its domination, and we cannot but feel a solid satisfaction that Mr Henderson will no longer be allowed to inflict his dangerous platitudes upon an unwilling House. But what of Mr S. Webb and Mr E. D. Morel? The one is the best specimen of the prig known to man, and it is strange that the other, whose hatred of Britain has not been concealed, should care to find a place in our British House of Commons. But they are likely to have less opportunity of doing harm in the House than out of it. In conclusion, the incredible has happened. Mr Lloyd George has lost 57 out of the 101 candidates who were to form the Central Party and govern England for life; Mr Bonar Law has a majority over all possible opponents; and we may at last look forward to some years of quiet government, reduced taxation, and a return to the life that was led before the war.

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